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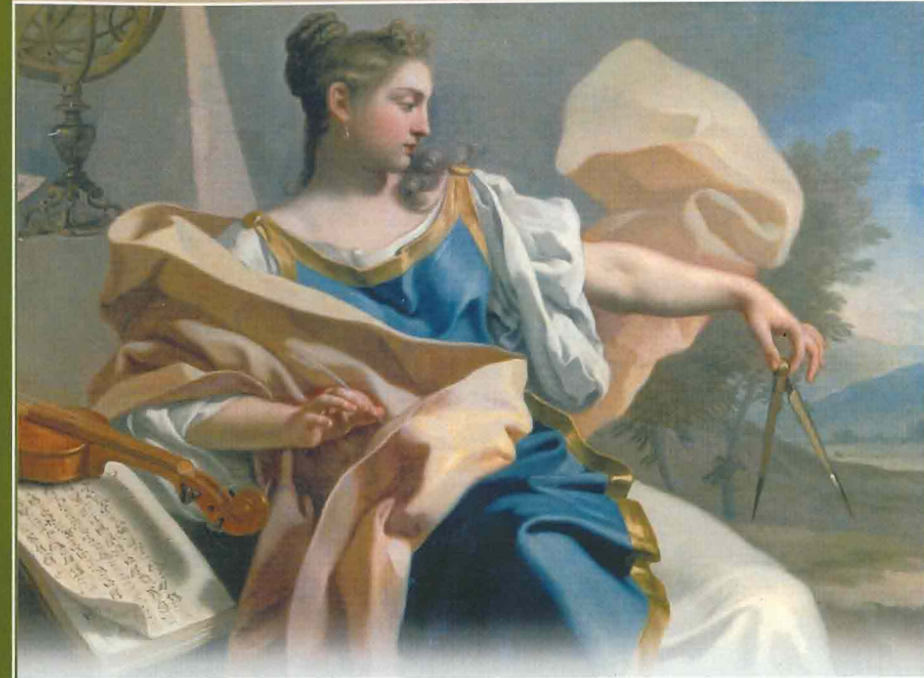
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# THE GREAT COURSES®

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# The Art of the Northern Renaissance

Taught by: Professor Catherine B. Scallen  
 Case Western Reserve University

## Part 2

## Course Guidebook

 THE TEACHING COMPANY®

## **Catherine B. Scallen, Ph.D.**

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Catherine B. Scallen is Associate Professor of Art History at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. She received her undergraduate degree in history from Wellesley College in Wellesley, Massachusetts, as a Wellesley Scholar (i.e., *magna cum laude*). She received her M.A. with honors from the Williams College Graduate Program in the History of Art, in Williamstown, Massachusetts. In Williamstown, she co-curated the museum exhibition “Cubism and American Photography” for the Robert Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute. Her Ph.D. in art history was awarded by Princeton University.

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Professor Scallen’s scholarship has centered on the art of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch artist Rembrandt van Rijn, the subject of many of her articles. Her book, *Rembrandt, Reputation, and the Practice of Connoisseurship*, was published in 2004. She has also served as a faculty study leader on trips to the Netherlands and Belgium for the Cleveland Museum of Art, Princeton University, and Case Western Reserve University and has provided audio commentary for “Flemish Paintings from the Hermitage Museum,” an exhibition of 17<sup>th</sup>-century Flemish art held at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto.

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## The Art of the Northern Renaissance

### Scope:

This course of 36 lectures is an introduction to the rich and varied art of the Northern Renaissance from about 1400 to about 1600. It surveys two types of art above all: oil painting and printmaking in the regions that now comprise modern Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands, along with a brief look at Switzerland and England with the career of Hans Holbein the Younger.

The term *Northern Renaissance* has become standard when referring to much of northern European art in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries and allows for pointed comparison with Italian Renaissance art. While Italian Renaissance art is better known today, both traditions were admired and imitated at the time. During the 15<sup>th</sup> century, some of the most important patrons of Northern Renaissance art were Italian themselves, and Italian artists were keenly aware of the innovations introduced by their northern counterparts. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it became more common for northern artists to travel in Italy, where they learned about the art of antiquity as well as that of the Renaissance.

Many kinds of artworks were made and treasured during this period: both large- and small-scale sculpture, precious metalwork, tapestries, and architecture. Yet the most consistently innovative work was executed in paint or in print. Fortunately, these media also claim the highest survival rate of artworks from the Northern Renaissance. Thus, the concentration on these media (with an occasional look at drawings, primarily as tools used in the process of painting) makes sense in an introductory survey.

The impact of political, religious, economic, and cultural changes on the art of the epoch is one essential focus of the course. The period from 1400 to 1600, the transition from the medieval world to the early modern era, was a highly eventful one throughout Europe. The consolidation of power by central states, the rise of the Protestant Reformation, increased international trade, the emergence of the middle classes, and the growing cultural interest in themes from the secular world and from classical antiquity—all these developments had powerful effects on the world of the artist, what he (almost always still a he) painted or executed in print, and often even how (in what style) he made it. For instance, the very invention and dissemination of printmaking in Europe during this era is related to the growth of disposable income and increased literacy across social classes.

The course topics are presented largely in a chronological and geographical format, following the careers of individual artists. The first 12 lectures cover 15<sup>th</sup>-century art in the Low Countries (modern Belgium and the Netherlands). The next 12 consider painting and prints made in what is now modern Germany, with a glance at a few artists active in Alsace (now in France), Switzerland, and England. For the last 12 lectures, we return to the Low Countries to study 16<sup>th</sup>-

century art. Such a schema allows us to understand the impact of innovations pioneered by certain artists on those who followed them, as well as the impact of societal changes on the art world. The emphasis in the discussion of each artist is multiple: The development of artistic style is traced, but the meaning of the subject and the function of each work are also considered. This allows us to properly relate the history of the art as understood in a more comprehensive sense than just the history of style.

We will examine a small group of artists through more than one lecture: Jan van Eyck, Rogier van der Weyden, Albrecht Dürer, Hans Holbein, and Pieter Bruegel. These artists are singled out because each was singularly influential, for his development of style and interpretation and choice of subjects. Unsurprisingly, each of them also seems to have been more than usually aware of his importance. Such a sense of self was a stark change from medieval society, where outside of the classes of the nobility and the clergy, the individual was of little moment. The changing status and self-consciousness of the artist as a figure worthy of respect and admiration is emphasized throughout the course.

We will also pay significant attention to the role of the patron, the person (or group) who either commissioned a work of art or bought one ready-made. Expansion of patronage beyond the realm of the highest nobility and the Christian Church is one of the cardinal developments of the era and would greatly affect how artists worked and what subjects they depicted.

We will also explore how paintings and prints were made, looking at such issues as who worked in a painter's workshop and what they did, how prints were designed and executed, and where these works of art were bought and sold. The beginnings of the open art market can be traced to the 16<sup>th</sup> century in northern Europe specifically, and its development is one of the signal accomplishments of the Northern Renaissance.

Finally, we will examine the changing nature of European society in this era, so long dominated by religion, for its influence on art. Even before the Protestant Reformation, aspects of spiritual devotion were shifting to an increased attention to private, individualized prayer. New kinds of artworks served the needs of this new form of devotion. But with the Protestant Reformation itself, the function of art in society would be questioned, particularly the purpose of religious art. Spurred on by this movement, and by a widespread interest in other aspects of culture than religion, many secular subjects arise or expand in this period, such as portraits, landscapes, mythological tales, and moralizing scenes of daily life. The role of art in society changed from primarily serving religious needs and, secondarily, the political requirements of rulers to that of a multivalent medium, providing decoration, entertainment, instruction, preservation of personal, memory, and status.

## Lecture Thirteen

### Practices in the Painter's Workshop

**Scope:** Contemporary documents and images provide some insight into the making of paintings during the 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries in northern Europe. The busy, collaborative workshops of that time were quite different from modern artists' studios. Beginning apprentices and more skilled journeyman helped workshop masters in a variety of tasks, such as grinding pigments and creating paintings from underdrawings. Few attained the status of master, which required citizenship and membership in the local guild. Guild regulations set out rules for all masters to follow. Guilds regulated the number of assistants who could be employed and the sale of work by foreign painters, for example. Originally, the workshop was a place of business where works could be bought and commissioned. Church feast-day fairs also became increasingly common points of sale during this period. In this lecture, we will also learn how paintings were actually produced, from the initial underdrawing to the laborious but amazing use of oil paint. Finished works and rare extant drawings reveal the importance of preparatory drawings in 15<sup>th</sup>-century painting.

### Outline

- I. The workshops of northern Renaissance masters were busy, collaborative places that employed many people in various stages of training.
  - A. The norm at the time was to imitate earlier artists and portray the same subjects repeatedly.
  - B. Painting was a craft often taught by a family member. The artisan-level classes were relatively prosperous; there were no "starving artists."
- II. In the Northern Renaissance workshop, artists' skills were developed by performing a variety of tasks.
  - A. Apprentices, whose parents paid the master, were taught menial tasks. They also trained by copying works of art. Later on, they worked on parts of paintings, such as backgrounds.
  - B. The next level up, journeymen, were paid to perform various essential tasks. They also traveled to receive training from other masters.
    1. Journeymen were more numerous than apprentices. Because they did not require as much training, their numbers were not regulated.
    2. Journeymen might work up an entire painting from a master's underdrawing, paint certain parts of paintings, and make copies of popular works.

3. Most journeymen did not go on to independent careers.
- III. To become a master painter, an artist generally had to follow the steps established by his town's guild before running his own workshop.
- A. Masters had to pay citizenship fees, guild fees, and sometimes fees to guild officials. The system favored natives because their guild fees were far lower than those of outsiders.
  - B. A painter had to present a masterpiece to demonstrate his ability to meet the guild's standards. Technically, he painted one masterpiece in his lifetime.
  - C. Masters running workshops had various opportunities.
    1. Jan van Eyck, for example, was a court painter. Court painters were exempt from guild regulations and were paid a yearly fee.
    2. Some masters, such as Rogier van der Weyden and Dieric Bouts, were town painters.
  - D. Some workshops survived for generations. Widows had the right to continue running them after their master husbands died.
- IV. Fifteenth-century painters' guilds helped artists by overseeing three areas: standards, social welfare, and competition.
- A. The guilds set standards to ensure that members had the necessary technical ability and skills to be masters. They also set standards for the production of works, sometimes supporting the painter or patron in cases of dispute in court.
  - B. The guilds provided for their members' welfare, supporting the families of deceased members and forgiving the dues of their poorest members.
  - C. The guilds also limited competition, sometimes going to court to stop certain practices.
- V. The guild also played a key role in the sale of artworks and especially tried to limit sales of foreign art.
- A. Since medieval times, fairs associated with church feast days provided opportunities for sales. Foreign artists could sell their works at such annual or semiannual fairs but only at the time and place of the fair.
  - B. From those fairs evolved permanent sale rooms run by the guilds.
  - C. Artists native to such towns as Bruges likely made most of their sales at their workshops, some of which had display rooms.
    1. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, most paintings sold were likely not commissioned. They were ready-made and sometimes could be personalized with a coat of arms, a patron saint, or portraits.
    2. Commissioned works were larger, more important paintings kept in palaces and churches, so they were well protected. Many ready-

made works created at this time have disappeared, destroyed by accident or on purpose.

- VI. Paintings produced by 15<sup>th</sup>-century workshops had different marks on them, such as required city marks or artists' monograms. Only rarely were paintings signed and dated. This explains why we have so many anonymous masters.
- A. Artists in this era did not title their works. Subjects were conventional; originality was not an aim.
  - B. Frames were important parts of paintings. Made by woodworkers, they sometimes bore artists' signatures. Original frames by Van Eyck and Memling survive, but most have been lost.
- VII. How were paintings of the time actually produced? Panels were either cut to size or joined with glue and dowels, then prepared with the ground, a mix of chalk and animal glue applied to make a light, smooth surface for the underdrawing.
- A. Albrecht Dürer's *Salvator Mundi* shows a careful underdrawing. The face and hands, here left undone, would have been the last to be painted because they were the most important part of the painting. Van Eyck also made careful underdrawings but did not always follow them.
  - B. Only underdrawings made with carbon-based materials can be revealed with infrared reflectography, a technology used for about 30 years. Sometimes the hands of both master and assistant can be seen in one drawing.
  - C. Painting was a slow undertaking in the 15<sup>th</sup> century because it involved the application of multiple layers of slow-drying oil paint through a process called *glazing*.
    1. Glazing allowed different pigments suspended in oil to be layered on top of each other. The technique could achieve a range of textures, from opaque to transparent, and a range of tones that could mimic the natural world.
    2. Among the materials used to make pigments, ultramarine, made from lapis lazuli, was expensive and not used unless the patron requested it. Most pigments were made from cheaper, earth-based materials.
    3. In paintings that are 500 to 600 years old, some effects change over time. Colors may become darker or more transparent.
  - D. Most commissioned paintings had contracts—we don't know if they were oral or written—that specified the subject, how long the painter would take, the types of pigments to be used, and how much of the work would be the master's.
  - E. A mid-16<sup>th</sup>-century painting shows us that the artist often used a *mahlstick*, a long stick that helped steady the painter's hand.



- F. In that same painting, we see that the artist's palette contained only a few colors.

#### VIII. Drawings were important in the painter's workshop as well.

- A. For example, the so-called Albergati portrait drawings by Van Eyck contained his color notes.
- B. Erasable tablets were used before paper became widely available. From the 14<sup>th</sup> century on, paper was a real boon to artists.
- C. Different kinds of proprietary pattern drawings were kept in the workshop. Some were for individual figures or motifs that could be combined in different ways to make up paintings.
- D. We saw the custom of portrait drawings with Rogier's *Saint Luke Drawing the Virgin Mary*.
- E. Early compositional studies seem to have been made right on the panel itself. Later, patterns were used to make paintings, such as *The Mourning Virgin* and *The Man of Sorrow* from the studio of Dieric Bouts, made about 50 years after his death. A kind of charcoal dust was sifted through small holes pricked in the drawing to create an outline that could be painted from.

- IX. The 15<sup>th</sup>-century painter's workshop was a bustling, energetic place, a collaborative enterprise unlike the popular image of a starving artist's lonely refuge. An engraving purporting to show Van Eyck's workshop depicts people working on different activities and all very busy.

#### Works Discussed:

**Albrecht Dürer:** *Salvator Mundi*, c. 1500, oil on panel, 1'10 7/8" x 1' 6 1/2", The Friedsam Collection, Bequest of Michael Friedsam, 1931 (32.100.64), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

**Lanceloot Blondeel:** *St. Luke Painting the Virgin's Portrait*, 1545, oil on canvas, 4'11" x 3'4 1/2", Groeninge Museum, Bruges.

**Anonymous German Artist:** *Modelbook of Fifty-Six Drawings*, early 15<sup>th</sup> century, paper mounted on small wood panels. 3 3/4 x 3 1/2", Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

**Dieric Bouts** (copy after): *The Mourning Virgin; The Man of Sorrows*, c. 1525, oil on panel, each 1'4" x 1' 1/2", The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

**Philips Galle** (after Johannes Stradanus): *A Painter's Workshop*, c. 1600, engraving, Private Collection.

#### Essential Reading:

Harbison, *Mirror of the Artist*, chapter 2.

#### Supplementary Reading:

Ainsworth and Christiansen, eds., *From Van Eyck to Bruegel. Early Netherlandish Painting in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, pp. 23–37, 205–271.

Bomford, ed., *Art in the Making: Underdrawings in Renaissance Paintings*, exhibition catalogue.

Dunkerton, et al., *Giotto to Dürer: Early Renaissance Painting in the National Gallery*, pp. 122–204.

Koreny, ed., *Early Netherlandish Drawings from Jan van Eyck to Hieronymus Bosch*.

#### Questions to Consider:

1. As we saw in this lecture, successful painters of the 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries often ran busy workshops that would help them execute their work. How does this fact affect how we understand the concept of authenticity?
2. Why would apprentices start their training by making drawn copies of other artworks?

## Lecture Fourteen

### The Veronica Master, Lochner, Schongauer

**Scope:** The German-speaking lands of the 15<sup>th</sup> century—modern-day Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and parts of Alsace (now in France)—had rich artistic traditions. This well-to-do area of Europe was a center of trade and art. In one leading city, Cologne, worked an anonymous painter, the Master of Saint Veronica, whose name stems from one of his most notable paintings. Showing the linear and coloristic elegance of the International Gothic, his style is also characterized by sweet, childlike faces and proportions. These qualities were also found in the work of Stefan Lochner, the principal painter in Cologne in the mid-1400s. His work is more complex spatially than the Veronica Master's. His religious works include a large altarpiece, a triptych made for the Cologne Council chapel. Martin Schongauer, active in Colmar (present-day Alsace) in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, knew the art of Cologne and the Low Countries. The monumentality of the figures in his *Virgin and Child in a Rose Bower* suggests the influence of Rogier van der Weyden. At the same time, the artist used the *sweet style* of earlier German depictions. Schongauer is best known today as an engraver and was one of the early masters of the medium.

#### Outline

- I. The German-speaking lands—modern-day Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and parts of Alsace (now in France)—had a rich artistic tradition from the medieval period. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, panel painting became the dominant art form.
- II. The area's political situation was complex and merits some attention.
  - A. Charlemagne united much of modern Germany, France, and parts of Italy into the Holy Roman Empire around 800. The kingdom disintegrated gradually so that by 1500, about 300 political entities existed, all technically loyal to the Holy Roman Emperor but autonomously ruled by regional nobles.
  - B. *Imperial free towns* were independent of these regional rulers. Because these towns had no artists' guilds, they offered painters more freedom than elsewhere.
  - C. This well-to-do area of Europe was a center of trade and art. The cities of the Hanseatic League, Cologne in particular, were important in trade.
  - D. In particular, Cologne's proximity to the Netherlands allowed innovations in Netherlandish art to filter to German art. However, Cologne painters signed and dated their paintings even less frequently

than Netherlandish painters, so we have many anonymous masters whose work is grouped stylistically.

- III. One of these anonymous painters, active in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, was the Master of Saint Veronica, named after his *St. Veronica Holding the Sudarium* from 1420. He worked in Cologne, but we know little else about him.
  - A. The legendary Saint Veronica gave Christ, as he carried the cross, a cloth to wipe his face, the *sudarium*. On it, a miraculous image of Christ's head appeared—the *vera icon*, or "true image," from which Veronica derives her name.
  - B. Veronica's gaze is directed downward, suggesting internal meditation on the image of Christ that she holds and emphasizing the emerging practice of private devotion.
  - C. Veronica's rounded face and tiny mouth lend her an almost childlike appearance often found in German International Gothic paintings. Hence, this style is sometimes referred to as the *sweet style*.
  - D. The gold background typical of International Gothic painting is seen here, along with decorative punch marks made by the Veronica Master.
  - E. The painting at first looks flat, but the large image of Christ's head seems three-dimensional and almost floats off the *sudarium*.
- IV. The *Madonna with the Sweet Pea Blossom* is a small, portable triptych with a half-length image of the Virgin and Christ Child in the center and Saints Catherine and Barbara on either side.
  - A. The Christ Child holds a rosary, used to say a set number of prayers in a certain order. As personal devotion grew in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, so did use of the rosary.
  - B. We see the International Gothic style in the elongated figures and the sweet style in the pretty, childlike faces of the female saints.
  - C. This tender image emphasizes maternal warmth. It has been suggested that this work may have had a female patron.
- V. In the next generation of artists, a painter known as Stefan Lochner stands out. As with Robert Campin, it is unclear whether the paintings attributed to Lochner were indeed his work. We do know that they were made by a master active in Cologne from about 1440 to the early 1450s.
  - A. Lochner was an important figure. He represented the painter's guild on the Cologne city council.
  - B. Lochner knew the Veronica Master's paintings, but his style displays greater spatial complexity than that of his predecessor.
  - C. The *Virgin in a Rose Bower* shows the Virgin in a garden, a popular theme in German lands. The sweet style is evident in the little faces and

round heads of the tiny angels playing music.

1. Behind the Virgin and Child are rose bushes on a trellis. Above them are two angels holding a cloth of honor. We may ask if the rose bushes are real or painted onto the cloth of honor.
2. The painter also plays with the illusion of space in depicting the Virgin's crown "against" the gold background. The tension between the flat surface of the painting and the represented space helps viewers move from the natural world to a transcendent one.

**VI.** The *Altarpiece of the Saints of Cologne* (or the *Dombild Altarpiece*, the "cathedral picture"), a triptych made in the 1440s for the chapel of the town council, is Lochner's largest work. The Virgin and Child and the Magi are shown in the central panel in a garden rather than the traditional stable.

- A. Female saints at left and male saints at right gather around to honor the crowned Virgin Mary, here shown as queen of heaven rather than the humble figure of traditional Nativity scenes.
- B. Other patron saints of the city are also shown: Saint Ursula and her virgin companions on the left wing and Saint Gereon, a legendary Roman Christian soldier martyred in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, on the right.
  1. The depiction of the saints is reminiscent of the interior of the *Ghent Altarpiece*. The face and pose of the Virgin are also similar in the two works, though Lochner's altarpiece has brilliant colors and gold decoration.
  2. People traveled more than we think at this time; it is possible that Lochner had been to Ghent and adapted the Netherlandish style he saw to the German style.

**VII.** Lochner's *Last Judgment* of about 1435 may predate Rogier van der Weyden's work of the same subject. There are similarities and differences between the two paintings.

- A. Similarities include hierarchical scale, symmetry in composition, and elongated figures.
- B. Rogier's *Last Judgment* is a relatively contained work, but Lochner's has a great deal of movement, seen in the swooping angels and the twisted postures of the damned as they march toward hell.
- C. Lochner seems to have known of the innovations in Netherlandish painting and synthesized them with the stylistic preferences of Cologne.

**VIII.** Martin Schongauer, active in Colmar (modern-day Alsace) in the late 1400s, was also influenced by the art of the Netherlands. Some speculate that he trained with Rogier, but that is unlikely, as he would have been just a teenager when the older artist died. Even so, we have evidence that Schongauer traveled to the Netherlands and to Burgundy.

- A. The *Virgin and Child in a Rose Bower* of 1473, shows a more

monumental Virgin than Lochner's work of the same subject. But it retains German traditions, with small angels, a gold background, and sweet faces.

1. This painting, Schongauer's only dated work, may have looked more like Lochner's before it was cut down at the top.
2. The idea of moving from an abstract space to a more Naturalistic mode was important.
3. A rare surviving study of peonies, used to prepare for this painting, shows the artist's interest in nature. It may have belonged to Albrecht Dürer, who was an admirer of Schongauer.

**B.** *Adoration of the Shepherds* breaks with the International Gothic style almost completely. There is a realistic landscape instead of a gold background.

1. Rather than the doll-like figures of Lochner and the Veronica Master, we see here rough-and-tumble shepherds.
2. This is a carefully composed painting that conveys the monumentality of its figures, Mary, Joseph, and the Christ Child. The deep, rich colors are also more typical of Netherlandish art.

**C.** Contemporaries most valued Schongauer as a painter, but he is best known today as an early master of engraving. Among his prints is *The Man of Sorrows with the Virgin Mary and St. John the Evangelist*.

1. The three-quarter-length, almost three-dimensional figures of Mary and John hold up Christ, their hands calling attention to his wounds. Rogier's *Braque Triptych* and *Mary Altarpiece* seem to have been influences.
2. This print was likely a private devotional image, made in multiples and accessible to a wide audience.
3. Tiny angels fill up the space, a typical characteristic of German painting at this time, but they do not detract from the larger figures.

#### Works Discussed:

**Master of St. Veronica:** *St. Veronica Holding the Sudarium*, c. 1420, oil on walnut panel, 1'5 1/2" x 1'1 1/4", National Gallery of Art, London.

*Madonna with the Sweet Pea Blossom*, c. 1405, tempera on wood, 1'8 3/4" x 1'1 1/2", Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne.

**Stefan Lochner:** *Virgin in a Rose Bower*, c. 1440, oil on panel, 1'8" x 1'3 3/4", Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne.

*Altarpiece of the Saints of Cologne (The Dombild Altarpiece)*, 1440s, mixed technique on wood and panel, central: 8'6 1/2" x 6'1", each wing: 8'6 1/2" x 4'8", Cologne Cathedral, Cologne.

*Last Judgment* (central panel), c. 1435, oil on panel, 4' x 5'7 1/4", Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne.



**Martin Schongauer:** *Virgin and Child in a Rose Bower*, 1473, tempera on panel, 7"7" x 3"8", St. Martin, Colmar, France.

*Studies of Peonies*, c. 1472–73, gouache and watercolor, 10 1/8" x 1"1", The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

*Adoration of the Shepherds*, c. 1480, oil on oakwood panel, 1'2 3/4" x 11", Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.

*The Man of Sorrows with the Virgin Mary and St. John the Evangelist*, 1470–75, copper-plate engraving, 8 3/4 x 6 1/4", Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna.

#### **Essential Reading:**

Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art* chapters 3–4, 12.

#### **Supplementary Reading:**

Chapuis, *Stefan Lochner: Image Making in Fifteenth-Century Cologne*

Corley, *Painting and Patronage in Cologne, 1300–1500*.

#### **Questions to Consider:**

1. Why might the International Gothic style have lasted longer in German lands than in the Burgundian realm?
2. What is the significance of the fact that Schongauer's drawing *Study of Peonies* has survived?

## **Lecture Fifteen**

### **15th-Century Prints**

**Scope:** The introduction of printmaking in Europe depended not only on the ability to carve wood or to incise patterns on metal but on a ready supply of paper. After paper mills were established in Italy in the 1270s, the conditions were right for this new art to develop. During the 15<sup>th</sup> century, now-rare woodcuts became common and were quickly disseminated throughout western Europe. These inexpensive, hand-colored prints depicted saints, the Virgin Mary, and other religious subjects seen in paintings. Secular subjects, such as maps and playing cards, were popular, too. Another type of printmaking, engraving on metal plates, probably arose in metalsmith shops. Produced by the second quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, engravings were more expensive than woodcuts because they were more difficult to make. As with woodcuts, their creators are largely unknown, though we can recognize masters from their style and sometimes their monograms.

#### **Outline**

- I. One of the most important developments in European culture during the 15<sup>th</sup> century was printmaking. Even before movable type presses were created, printed images abounded.
  - A. Printmaking was established about 800 or 900 in China, but papermaking technology did not reach Europe until the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The first paper mill opened in Italy in the 1270s.
  - B. Images had already been printed on textiles used for decorative purposes.
- II. Woodcutting was the first of the print process to develop in western Europe.
  - A. Creating a woodcut entailed drawing an image on a block of wood, therefore, all prints reverse their prepared images.
  - B. Designing and carving were two separate tasks. First, the designer drew an image on a block of wood. Then, the carver cut away from both sides of the line in a relief process.
  - C. The wooden block was then inked with a relatively stiff ink. A dampened sheet of paper was put on top of the block and pressure was exerted, at first with something like a wooden mallet and, later, with a printing press, which made the work faster and easier.
  - D. Woodcut blocks were fairly durable but would break down over time.
  - E. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, woodcut prints were typically hand-colored by

professional painters or by their early owners. The prints were rarely signed or dated at that time.

- F. The most popular prints were probably of devotional subjects. Far more people could afford inexpensive prints than paintings.
- G. Because they were inexpensive, these prints were not considered valuable, so they are now as rare as they were once common.

III. An example of an early devotional woodcut is a *Pietà* from southern Germany or Austria. It shows the Virgin Mary with her dead son Jesus across her lap.

- A. The emphasis is on contour lines that form the two figures. For example, we see a rich pattern of line work for Mary's garments.
- B. *Pietàs* were popular subjects for sculptural groups in medieval Germany; thus, they were also a logical subject for later woodcuts.
- C. In this hand-colored print, the wounds on Christ's face and hands were added with red paint, while the blood-red background provides a dramatic yet abstract space for the image.
- D. There were also woodcuts of secular subjects.

IV. Woodcuts were the first images to be used in printed books. Popular in the Low Countries and Germanic lands was the blockbook, which had words and images carved on the same block of wood.

- A. *Biblia Pauperum*, or bibles of the poor, were popular types of blockbooks. These relatively inexpensive books, intended for sometimes illiterate users, told stories mostly through images.
- B. A page from a Netherlandish blockbook pairs scenes from the Old Testament and the New Testament, reminiscent of the style of Bouts.

V. Another form of printmaking, engraving, arose around 1430 in southern Germany. Like woodcutting, engraving could produce multiple images, but the technique was different.

- A. Engravings used an *intaglio* process, in which lines were carved into a metal (usually copper) plate with special tools, called *gravers* or *burins*. After the design was made, the plate was inked. A dampened sheet of paper was laid on top and the plate was sent through a press to lift the ink out of the carved grooves and onto the paper, leaving a slightly embossed surface.
- B. Engravings were more expensive than woodcuts because they were more difficult and time-consuming to make.
- C. The first generation of engravers is largely anonymous. By the 1460s, some identified their work with monograms or hallmarks.
- D. Engraved lines can be thick or thin and can swell or taper. The tip of

the burin can be used to make flecks and other effects.

- E. Woodcuts are black and white, but engravings have gray tones. In some ways, they are closer to paintings than woodcuts.

VI. An early engraving from the 1430s by the Master of the Playing Cards is *Knave Reading a Letter*, or *A Poet Reading*.

- A. This master used a burin that left a clean line and another tool that left little bits of metal (*burrs*) on either side of the groove. This technique of *drypoint engraving* wears down quickly but has nice original effects. These cards have a delicate, silvery tone.
- B. These prints were copied many times, an indication of the popularity of both secular and religious subjects and the novelty of card games in Europe.

VII. The Master E.S. created about 318 engravings in the mid-1400s. Perhaps made by a workshop rather than one individual, these works reveal a systematic style with complex compositions and a great deal of detail.

- A. In the *Fall of Man*, God the Father confronts Adam and Eve after they have eaten the forbidden fruit. The master uses line as a substitute for color. We get a sense of texture, even without color in this print.
- B. *The Garden of Love* is a humorous print showing amorous activity in a love garden, a then-popular idea in poetry and art.

VIII. The Housebook Master, active from about 1470 to 1500, used a casual style for his drypoint engraving, as if he were trying to reproduce the effect of drawing.

- A. His *Holy Family by the Rosebush* repeats the popular German theme of the Virgin Mary in a garden. In this charming image, Mary steadies Jesus while Joseph rolls apples to him.
- B. A popular secular subject was *Unequal Lovers*. Here, a young girl and an old man embrace as she caresses his coins. The story is at once moral and humorous, showing the folly of the man, who believes that the girl is interested in him, not his money.

IX. More than 600 engravings have been attributed to Israhel van Meckenem, the most prolific engraver of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. A second-generation German engraver (c. 1440/45–1503), he reworked and reissued plates by Master E.S. He copied others' works and made his own, as well.

- A. An original design, a self-portrait with his wife, Ida, was the first engraved double portrait and the first signed self-portrait in print.
- B. Posed against a fabric background, the couple projects an air of confidence and affluence. Intersecting lines provide a range of tones and help the heads stand out.

- X. Martin Schongauer was a technical virtuoso with the burin. He made about 116 engravings, many of them widely admired throughout western Europe.
- In his most famous print, the *Temptation of Saint Anthony*, the aged Anthony, the 4<sup>th</sup>-century Egyptian hermit and founder of Christian monasticism, is lifted into the sky by demons in a chaotic scene expertly rendered by Schongauer's range of lines and dots.
  - The parable of the wise and foolish virgins from the book of Matthew was popular even in Medieval art.
    - The moral is to be prepared for God to come at all times.
    - Schongauer's *Foolish Virgin* shows this popular theme, with an alluring woman holding an empty lamp.
  - A *Censer*, showing an object used to disperse incense in religious rituals, is one of the Schongauer's most beautiful prints. This kind of line work was possible in prints only through engraving at this time.
  - Series of prints of one subject also became popular. Schongauer's *Life of the Virgin* is an example. *Flight into Egypt* shows the weary Mary and Christ Child on their donkey while Joseph tries to pick dates from a palm tree.
  - Schongauer's largest, most ambitious print, *Christ Carrying the Cross*, shows Christ fallen to the ground from the weight of the cross. His gaze to viewers implicates them as onlookers to the scene.
    - The range of tones is exceptional, achieved through cross-hatching and the incorporation of bare outlines to suggest distant towns.
    - Schongauer's technical ability is at its height but is used for the purpose of conveying the emotional truth of Christ's suffering.
  - A young Dürer traveled to Colmar to meet Schongauer, but he was too late. Schongauer had just died. Dürer would have to train himself as an engraver.

#### Works Discussed:

**South German or Austrian Artist:** *Pietà from Stift Lambach*, 1420–30, colored woodcut, 8 x 5½", Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna.

**Anonymous:** *Biblia Pauperum* (Poor People's Bible), (left: *Pharaoh's Army Drowned in the Red Sea*; *Baptism of Christ*; and *Moses' Spies Returning with Grapes from Canaan*, right: *Esau Selling Jacob His Birthright*; *Temptation of Christ*; and *Temptation of Adam*), c. 1460, woodcut, handcolored with watercolor; 10 5/8" x 13 7/16", © The Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund, 1986.91.

**Master of the Playing Cards:** *A Poet Reading*, 1430s, engraving and drypoint, sheet: 5¼ x 3½", Gift of Ladislaus and Beatrix von Hoffman, Image © 2006 Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

**Master E.S. (active c. 1450 to 1467):** *Fall of Man*, engraving on antique paper, 7½ x 5 9/16" on sheet, Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati, Bequest of Herbert Greer French, 1943.69, Cincinnati.

*The Garden of Love*, c. 1465, engraving, 9 3/16 x 5 15/16", © The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland.

**The Housebook Master:** *The Holy Family by the Rosebush*, c. 1485–95, drypoint, unique impression, 5½ x 4½", © Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

*Unequal Lovers: Young Girl and Old Man*, 1470–85, drypoint, unique impression, 4¼ x 3¼", © Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

**Israhel van Meckenem:** *Double Portrait of Israhel van Meckenem and His Wife Ida*, c. 1490, engraving, 5 1/8 x 6 7/8", Rosenwald Collection, Image © 2007 Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

**Martin Schongauer:** *Temptation of Saint Anthony*, 1480–90, engraving, 1¼" x 9", Fondazione Magnani Rocca, Corte di Mamiano, Italy.

*A Foolish Virgin*, c. 1475/1491, engraving, 6 x 4¾", Rosenwald Collection, Image © 2007 Board of Trustees National Gallery of Art, Washington.

*A Censer*, c. 1480–90, engraving, 10¼ x 8¼", © The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Purchase from the John L. Severance Fund, 1951.429.

*The Flight into Egypt*, 1470s, engraving, 8¾ x 6¾", Musée du Louvre, Paris.

*Christ Carrying the Cross*, 1480–85, engraving, 11½" x 1'5", British Museum, London.

#### Essential Reading:

Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art*, pp. 13–15, 186–193, 248–265.

#### Supplementary Reading:

Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet/Rijksmuseum, *Livelier than Life*.

Dackerman, *Painted Prints: The Revelation of Color*.

Landau and Parshall, *The Renaissance Print, 1470–1550*.

Parshall and Schoch, *Origins of European Printmaking: Fifteenth-Century Woodcuts and Their Public*.

Shestack, *Fifteenth Century Engravings of Northern Europe from the National Gallery of Art*.

#### Questions to Consider:

- In what ways were woodcuts and engravings different beyond the difference in techniques used to make them?
- Why do you think Israhel van Meckenem made an engraved portrait of himself and his wife?

## Lecture Sixteen

### Albrecht Dürer's Early Career

**Scope:** Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) came of age in German-speaking Nuremberg in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. This gifted and prolific painter, printmaker, and draughtsman would become the most renowned artist of his generation in northern Europe. More of his oeuvre is preserved than that of any other northern artist of his time, indicating both Dürer's and his contemporaries' awareness of his remarkable talents. Nearly 1,000 drawings are attributed to him, in contrast to only 600 surviving drawings for all 15<sup>th</sup>-century Netherlandish artists.

In the first of three sessions on Dürer, we will examine his early career, including his training in Nuremberg; his travels to Basel, Venice, and other cities; and his success as an independent artist back in Nuremberg up to the year 1500. His early works—including the ambitious *Apocalypse* woodcut series of 1498—display complex designs, technical virtuosity, and the influence of Christian neo-Platonic thought.

#### Outline

- I. Born in 1471 in German-speaking Nuremberg to a goldsmith, Albrecht Dürer became the most influential artist of his generation in northern Europe. Nearly 1,000 drawings of this talented and prolific engraver, painter, and draughtsman survive, compared with only 600 drawings for all 15<sup>th</sup>-century Netherlandish artists.
  - A. Nuremberg was an imperial free city, an important Humanist and trade center that supported much work for artists.
  - B. Dürer first trained as a goldsmith with his father there. Early in his training, he produced a *Self-Portrait* in silverpoint in 1484 that he later dated, indicating an instinct to preserve his work. Already he demonstrates an uncanny ability to depict nature.
  - C. Dürer had a second apprenticeship in the workshop of Nuremberg artist Michael Wolgemut. The shop designed woodcut illustrations for books, such as those for the *Liber Chronicarum* (*Chronicle of the World*) from 1493. One of this book's 652 woodcut illustrations was of the city of Nuremberg.
  - D. After this apprenticeship, Dürer became a traveling journeyman. In Colmar, he hoped to meet Martin Schongauer, but that artist had just died. Dürer then went to Basel to meet one of Schongauer's brothers, a goldsmith.
    1. In Basel, Dürer designed woodcuts for religious books and

Humanist texts. A frontispiece for a 1492 edition of Saint Jerome's letters shows *St. Jerome in His Study*, a saint whom Dürer would portray many times. The signed woodcut's design is unusually detailed for its time.

2. Dürer is the first major artist to embark on designing woodcuts as a part of his overall career.
  3. Dürer also made in Basel a drawing of a female bath attendant of 1493, very likely the first surviving study of a live nude done in northern Europe. Dürer was not afraid of such change and proved to be innovative in various ways.
- II. Dürer was back in Nuremberg by May 1494 to begin an independent career and to marry Agnes Frey.
  - A. A pen drawing shows Frey before their marriage, wearing her hair in a braid, as maidens did. This deft study takes an informal approach to the sitter.
  - B. Before settling in Nuremberg, Dürer became one of the first northern artists to visit Italy. He made topographical watercolors of various locales along the way—the first true independent landscape studies to survive. When he arrived in Italy, Dürer spent most of his time in Venice.
    1. Dürer was influenced by the painter Giovanni Bellini and the engraver Andrea Mantegna, a true Renaissance artist interested in classical subjects and forms, as seen in his *Bacchanal with Silenus*.
    2. Dürer drew copies of both artists' works, combining classical subjects with a northern engraving style, as we see in Dürer's versions of *Bacchanal with Silenus*.
    3. Northern European artists increasingly began to turn to classical antiquity for inspiration at this time.
  - C. Dürer had taken up engraving by 1494 and quickly became skilled in this difficult art. He found models in Schongauer and the Housebook Master but surpassed them in his ability to convey different textures and tones.
    1. The *Madonna with the Monkey* from about 1498 shows the Virgin and Child with a chained monkey, a symbol of chained evil or passions. The monumental figures and impressive landscape provide a sense of naturalism.
    2. The landscape is based on a watercolor drawing of a house by a lake from a few years earlier.
- III. Dürer continued to paint and make woodcuts while he was engraving.
  - A. The *Virgin and Child at a Window* from 1498 reflects the artist's interest in Venetian Renaissance painting. The geometrical composition owes a debt to Bellini, with its solid figures and strong colors. The Virgin is less idealized than Bellini's, though still dignified.

- B. Dürer received commissions for portraits, including one of Oswolt Krel, the young manager of the Nuremberg branch of the Great Ravensburg Trading Company. His and his wife's coats of arms are shown on the wings.
    - 1. The ambiguous space shows Krel with a red drapery behind him and a gorgeous landscape off to the side.
    - 2. In this dynamic composition, Krel is turned and gazes at the viewer. Less static than earlier 15<sup>th</sup>-century portraits, this one conveys a bit of the sitter's personality.
  - C. A *Self-Portrait* from 1498 is the first autonomous self-portrait of an artist whose identity is certain. The traditional Netherlandish composition—a figure in a room with a landscape view through a window—features a dominant figure dressed expensively.
    - 1. Dürer is shown wearing gloves, perhaps to downplay the manual labor of painting and to reinforce the notion of the artist as an intellectual.
    - 2. The confident gaze suggests that Dürer was already a great success at age 27.
- IV. Dürer's fame grew in 1498 with the publication of a series of large woodcuts showing scenes from the book of Revelation of Saint John. The subject of the apocalypse had been popular during the medieval period and flourished again in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century.
- A. Printed Bibles with woodcut illustrations based on the book of Revelation may have been precedents for this body of work. But Dürer went further than any artist before in his design and technical virtuosity. The series must have taken one to two years to produce.
  - B. The most famous print from the series, *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, shows the figures of conquest trampling all underneath. This horrible event is rendered in close linework and a range of styles. It's the perfect marriage of idea, form, and execution.
    - 1. It's unlikely, however, that Dürer did his own cutting, along with designing, for this piece. He probably didn't have the time because he was busy with other projects.
    - 2. This print reveals Dürer's brilliance in marketing as well as art. With many Europeans nervous about the coming of the year 1500, the artist took advantage of the mood of society. 1500 did not bring about the Apocalypse, but it did bring about a new era in art, with Dürer as its leader.
- V. Dürer's final painted *Self-Portrait* from 1500 is a complex image about his self-regard and his understanding of the artist's role. He is shown in a frontal pose, hair cascading onto the fur trim of his robe and his right hand placed prominently in the midline.
- A. At left is Dürer's characteristic monogram, a *D* inside a large *A*. At

right is a Latin inscription with his name and age, 28.

- B. The pose assimilates that of the *vera icon*, the true image of Christ. His likely intention can be traced to Christian neo-Platonic thought of the time, which emphasized man as the direct reflection of God. Some saw God as a divine artist and human artists as reflections of the divine.
- C. Dürer's application of these ideas to a self-portrait is entirely original. His message is that an artist with God-given talents should use those talents to follow in the path of Christ.
- D. The geometric construction here also suggests the influence of the Humanist belief in scientific approaches to making art, such as mathematical perspective and the study of proportions. Dürer promoted this idea in northern Europe, in part to promote the status of the artist and his own status, as well.

### Works Discussed:

**Albrecht Dürer:** *Self Portrait as a Boy*, 1484, silverpoint on paper, 10¾ x 7¾", Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna.

*St. Jerome in his Study*, 1492, woodcut, 9½ x 7½", Private Collection.

*Female Bath Attendant*, 1493, pen and ink, 10¾ x 5¾", Musée Bonnat, Bayonne.

*Wife of the Artist*, 1494–95, pen drawing, 6¼ x 3¾", Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna.

*Bacchanal with Silenus*, c. 1494, pen and brown ink, 11¾" x 1'5", Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna.

*Madonna with the Monkey*, c. 1498, engraving, 7½ x 4¾", Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.

*House by a Pond*, 1496, watercolor and tempera, 8¼ x 9", British Museum, London.

*Virgin and Child at a Window (Haller Madonna)*, c. 1498, oil on panel, 1'7¼" x 1'3½", National Gallery of Art, Washington.

*Portrait of Oswolt Krel*, 1499, oil on panel, 1'7½" x 1'3¼", Alte Pinakothek, Munich.

*Self-Portrait with Landscape*, 1498, oil on panel, 1'8½" x 1'4", Museo del Prado, Madrid.

*Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, 1497–98, woodcut, 1'3½" x 11", Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, Uffizi, Florence.

*Self-Portrait*, 1500, oil on panel, 2'2¼" x 1'7¼", Alte Pinakothek, Munich.

**Wilhelm Pleydenwurff and Michael Wolgemut:** *Nuremberg from the Liber Chronicarum* (printed by Anton Koberger), 1493, woodcut, Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin.

**Andrea Mantegna:** *A Bacchanal with Silenus*, c. 1470s, burin engraving, 10¼" x 1'4¾", National Museum of Art, Bucharest.

**Giovanni Bellini:** *Madonna and Child*, late 1480s, oil on panel, 2'11" x 2'4", The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

#### Essential Reading:

Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art*, chapter 13.

Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer*, reprint ed., introduction by Jeffrey Chipps Smith.

#### Supplementary Reading:

Bartrum, ed., *Albrecht Dürer and His Legacy*.

Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art*.

Kurth, *The Complete Woodcuts of Albrecht Dürer*.

Smith, *Nuremberg: A Renaissance City*.

Strauss, ed., *The Complete Engravings, Etchings, and Drypoints of Albrecht Dürer*.

Strieder, *Albrecht Dürer: Paintings, Prints, Drawings*, rev. ed.

#### Questions to Consider:

1. What advantages did Dürer's initial training as a goldsmith offer him as a printmaker?
2. Why did Dürer and others preserve his earliest efforts as an artist, as well as his nature studies?

## Lecture Seventeen

### Albrecht Dürer's Mature Career

**Scope:** Once Dürer's career was well launched, he was able to pursue his own artistic interests in addition to commissions, knowing he would find a ready audience. His intellectual approach to art, practiced through the study of mathematical perspective, ideal proportions, and anatomy, was unprecedented among German and Netherlandish artists and stood behind such works as *Adam and Eve* and *St. Jerome in His Study*. Dürer continued to produce altarpieces, portraits, and prints on a variety of subjects. His fame now international in scope, Dürer traveled to Italy to seek protection for his intellectual property. Italian artists were copying his woodcuts and engravings without his permission and to his financial detriment. However, he was stimulated by the environment of Italy, which he believed better supported artists than his city of Nuremberg. Even in this mature phase of his career, Dürer paid attention to artistic innovation, creating a few etchings, a new type of print in which the artist draws through a sticky *ground* on a metal plate and places it in an acid bath.

#### Outline

- I. During the mature phase of his career (1500–15), Dürer participated deeply in Humanist culture. His multimedia career flourished, and a second trip to Italy further piqued his interest in rationally created art and bolstered his international fame.
  - A. Dürer's final painted *Self-Portrait*, from 1500, associates the artist with divine creativity, emphasizing both his artistic self-confidence and his piety.
  - B. The form of the Latin inscription at right is like that used in Humanist texts of the time. It's Dürer's hint that the visual arts should be construed as a liberal art.
  - C. Around 1500, Dürer studied the treatise of the ancient Roman writer Vitruvius *On Architecture*, a book that covered many subjects, including human proportion. According to Vitruvius, the head should be one-eighth of the total body length.
  - D. Dürer used a compass and a ruler to explore human proportions in a number of drawings as studies for his 1504 engraving *Adam and Eve*.
    1. One ink drawing shows two large beautiful nudes against a dark background standing in *contrapposto*, that is, the correct orientation of the upper and lower body as weight shifts. This classical principle of anatomy was revived during the Renaissance.



2. A proof impression—a print pulled from the plate before the work is complete—for *Adam and Eve* shows a bit of Dürer's work process. The background was created before the central figures.
- E. The final engraving is a tour de force, with detailed linework and an extraordinary balance of light and dark tones.
  1. The figure of Adam is based on the *Apollo Belvedere*, a famous statue excavated in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The figure of Eve is based on a statue of Venus.
  2. Compared to *The Fall of Man* by Master E.S., we see how much further Dürer pushed the medium of engraving.
  3. The print is also thematically rich. According to medical theory of the Renaissance era, after the Fall, the perfect balanced temperament of humans became unbalanced, and one of four temperaments would dominate: sanguine, phlegmatic, melancholic, or choleric. Animals were understood to be dominated by one temperament—for example, a cat was choleric. Therefore, animals are present throughout the print to remind us of these humors.
  4. Hanging from a fig tree is a plaque that says in Latin, "Albrecht Dürer of Nuremberg made this in 1504." This plaque imitates one that appears in a 15<sup>th</sup>-century print of male nudes by Pollaiuolo, perhaps suggesting that Dürer felt he had surpassed Pollaiuolo in beauty, accuracy, and ability.
- II. In 1505, Dürer traveled to Venice for the second time. He received commissions for portraits and an altarpiece and sought to protect his works, which were being copied and sold, notably by the Italian printmaker Marcantonio Raimondi.
  - A. No legal copyright existed. The Venetian state only banned Raimondi from including Dürer's monogram on his future copies.
  - B. Dürer continued to study such issues as perspective. In Venice, he learned much, saw much, and enjoyed life.
  - C. His portrait of a young Venetian woman from 1505 shows attention to fashion. Although it is unfinished, it conveys a sense of liveliness.
  - D. In a letter to his friend Willibard Pirckheimer shortly before his return, Dürer wrote, "Oh, how I shall yearn for the sun. Here, I am a gentleman; at home, a parasite." Though Dürer was respected at home, he must have felt that Italy granted artists a higher status than Germany did.
  - E. Italians loved Dürer as much as he loved them. His art was known and respected there.
- III. Dürer returned to Nuremberg, where he remained busy in all three media.

- A. His last painted altarpiece, the *Adoration of the Trinity*, was commissioned by Matthias Landauer for a chapel dedicated to all the saints in the *Zwölfbrüderhaus*, a home for 12 indigent artisans that the patron founded in 1501.
  1. Dürer emphasized the sense of rational creation through the symmetry of the composition. We see saints and prophets above, the Trinity in the center, and popes and emperors below.
  2. This is a vision of the City of God. All turn inward toward the Trinity, who face directly toward the viewer.
  3. The use of bright colors was likely inspired by Italian art. An extensive landscape is unpeopled but for the figure of Dürer himself, holding a plaque inscribed with his name.
- B. That same year, 1511, Dürer designed a woodcut of *The Holy Trinity*. This refined print shows God holding the body of Christ, surrounded by angels. Below, heads representing the four winds suggest the dissemination of God's grace.
- C. In 1511, Dürer also reissued the *Apocalypse* series, finished a woodcut series of the Passion of Christ, and completed a woodcut series of 19 prints of the Life of the Virgin Mary. A print from the latter, *The Flight into Egypt*, pays homage to Schongauer's engraving of the same subject, yet Dürer surpassed the earlier master in evoking mood through a deeper space and wider range of tones.
- IV. Some scholars consider the highpoint of Dürer's career as an engraver to be 1513–14, when he made three notable prints: *Knight, Death and the Devil* (1513), *Melencolia I*, and *St. Jerome in His Study* (both 1514).
  - A. Contrary to what some have suggested, these illustrations probably weren't meant to be a set. In fact, Dürer sold them individually and in different combinations. Nonetheless, their technical brilliance and scale distinguish them from previous engravings.
  - B. *St. Jerome in His Study* shows the 4<sup>th</sup>- and 5<sup>th</sup>-century saint, an early Christian theologian who produced the Vulgate, the first Latin edition of the Bible. Jerome was the most popular saint in 15<sup>th</sup>- and 16<sup>th</sup>-century European art, in large part because of the admiration Renaissance Humanists felt for him.
    1. In the print, Jerome works busily in a beautiful chamber, accompanied by his sleeping dog and lion, attributes from a medieval legend that had no basis in his real life.
    2. A cardinal's hat on the back wall suggests Jerome's status in the Church.
    3. The skull, hourglass, and small crucifix were objects traditionally associated with Jerome in the desert. Here, they are brought inside for the first time.

4. These objects are meant to convey human mortality, as well as the nature of Christ's sacrifice for humankind, so that one does not fall prey to intellectual vanity or the worldly pursuits of learning.
  5. Many depictions of Jerome as a scholar in his study were based on this image by Dürer. The artist's technique was also acclaimed for its textures, sense of light, and range of tones.
- C. As Dürer grows into his maturity, we see other aspects of his life, such as in his drawing of his mother in charcoal. It shows her at age 63. She is haggard, wasting away, yet this is a loving and poignant depiction of this widow.
- V. Despite the demands of patronage and his own ambitions, Dürer continued to pay attention to artistic innovations. He challenged himself with a new print technique, etching.
- A. Like engraving, etching is an intaglio process. Lines are carved into a plate, which is inked and sent through a press with dampened paper. In etching, a sharp metal tool pulls through a *ground*, a sticky substance applied to the plate.
  - B. After the design is made, the plate is placed in an acid bath. The acid "bites" into the plate, a chemical process that yields a different appearance with a greater variety of line than engraving.
  - C. Etching appealed to painters in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century because it was like drawing and easier to learn than engraving.
  - D. Dürer's *Agony in the Garden* from 1515 shows Christ kneeling in prayer in the garden after the Last Supper. His disciples are asleep. He asks God to remove the cup, a symbol of his fate.
    1. An angel hovers near the cup as soldiers and Judas arrive to arrest Christ. The stark contrasts of dark and light lend drama to the scene. The surface almost moves in the details of Christ's hair, the squiggle of leaves, and the fluttering of angel wings.
    2. Dürer used etching only a few times in his career. He seems to have preferred the greater control of engraving.

#### Works Discussed:

**Albrecht Dürer:** *Adam and Eve*, 1504, pen, brown ink, and brown wash, 9½ x 8", purchased in 1910, I.257d., The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

*Adam and Eve (Proof Impression)*, 1504, engraving, 9¾ x 7½", Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna.

*Adam and Eve*, c. 1504, engraving, 10 x 7¾", Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

*A Young Lady of Venice*, 1505, oil on panel, 1¾" x 9¾", Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

*Landauer Altarpiece (Adoration of the Trinity)*, 1511, oil on panel, 4'5¼" x 4'½", Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

*The Holy Trinity*, 1511, woodcut, 1'3 ½" x 11¼", Private Collection.

*The Flight into Egypt*, from the *Marienleben (Life of Mary)*, 1503–04, woodcut, 11½ x 8¼", Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich

*St. Jerome in his Study*, 1514, engraving, 9¾ x 7½", Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.

*Drawing of the Artist's Mother*, 1514, charcoal, 1'4½" x 1', Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.

*Agony in the Garden*, 1515, etching, 1'3¼" x 11", Musée le Vergeur, Reims.

**Master E.S.:** *Fall of Man*, engraving on antique paper, 7½ x 5 9/16" on sheet, Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati, Bequest of Herbert Greer French, 1943.69.

**Antonio del Pollaiuolo:** *Battle of Ten Naked Men*, 1465–70, engraving, 1'3 1/8" x 1'11¼", Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, Uffizi, Florence.

#### Essential Reading:

Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art*, chapter 13.

Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer*, introduction by Jeffrey Chipps Smith.

#### Supplementary Reading:

Bartrum, ed., *Albrecht Dürer and His Legacy*.

Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art*.

Kurth, *The Complete Woodcuts of Albrecht Dürer*.

Strauss, ed., *The Complete Engravings, Etchings, and Drypoints of Albrecht Dürer*.

Strieder, *Albrecht Dürer: Paintings, Prints, Drawings*, rev. ed.

#### Questions to Consider:

1. What do you think Dürer wished to emphasize most about the fall of mankind in his engraving *Adam and Eve*?
2. Why might Dürer have stopped painting self-portraits by the time he was 30 years old?

## Lecture Eighteen

### Albrecht Dürer's Later Career

**Scope:** In the final period of his career, from 1515 until his death in 1528, Dürer was often in the service of Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I and his successor, Charles V. He continued to associate with Humanist scholars and, on a number of occasions, painted or engraved their portraits. In 1520–21, Dürer traveled through western Germany and the Netherlandish region to attend the coronation of Charles V and to ensure the continuation of his pension as a court artist. During his travels, he met many important figures of the day, including the theologian Desiderius Erasmus and a young printmaker, Lucas van Leyden. In Antwerp, Dürer received news of Martin Luther's arrest in Germany. The artist generally supported Luther's controversial reforms of the Roman Catholic Church. Several works, including a woodcut of the *Last Supper* and the painting *The Four Holy Men*, reflected Dürer's religious views. Dürer was a widely celebrated artist whose contributions changed the face of Northern Renaissance art. His legacy includes not only numerous artworks but a treatise that became a signal contribution to Renaissance art theory.

### Outline

- I. In the final period of his career, from 1515 until his death in 1528, Dürer continued to serve as court artist to the Hapsburg rulers. Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I had more ambition than money and used printmaking to disseminate political propaganda.
  - A. Dürer served as court artist from 1512 on while continuing to live in Nuremberg. He worked on large collaborative projects, some never finished, and a few individual projects.
  - B. In 1518, while attending the Diet of Augsburg, Dürer made a drawing of Maximilian, an astute study of the aging monarch that portrays his dignity but also the ravages of aging.
    - 1. The drawing was the basis for a richly colored, sympathetic oil portrait, likely finished after Maximilian's death in 1519.
    - 2. A posthumous inscription on the painting praises Maximilian and notes the date of his death. The imperial and Hapsburg coats of arms identify his dynastic lineage.
    - 3. Maximilian holds a pomegranate, his personal emblem and a symbol of resurrection.
- II. Maximilian was succeeded as Holy Roman Emperor by his grandson, Charles V. To ensure continuation of his court pension, Dürer traveled to Aachen in 1520 to attend the coronation, part of a year-long trip through

western Germany and the Burgundian Netherlands.

- A. Dürer admired works by 15<sup>th</sup>-century Netherlandish artists and met contemporary artists. He recorded details of his trip in a diary.
  - B. Dürer arrived in Antwerp in August 1520. A pen drawing of Antwerp's harbor shows his fascination with this international center of trade and artistic production.
  - C. Dürer was feted by merchants, civic administrators, and fellow artists. He also met with Charles V's Flemish secretary in Brussels to submit his petition for the continuation of his pension.
  - D. In October, he traveled to Aachen for the coronation and received confirmation of the imperial pension. He returned to Antwerp, where he stayed until April 1521. He left the Low Countries in August 1521.
  - E. During his trip, Dürer met many important figures of the day, often making portraits of them.
    - 1. Dürer twice drew portraits of the famed theologian Desiderius Erasmus.
    - 2. In 1521, Dürer painted a portrait of Bernard von Reesen, a merchant from Danzig (Gdansk). The sitter died later that year but in this portrait looks youthful and determined.
  - F. Portuguese nobleman Rodrigo Fernandez d'Almada obtained a portrait from Dürer and, as a gift, a painting of *St. Jerome in His Cell*.
    - 1. In the painting, the saint looks at us, his head resting on one hand and his pointing finger on a skull. The clear message is a warning about mortality and the vanity of earthly pursuits.
    - 2. Dürer made five preliminary drawings for this painting. He inscribed one of them, stating the age of the paid model as 93.
  - G. Dürer met Dutch painter and printmaker Lucas van Leyden, one of his greatest admirers and rivals. Dürer created a portrait of the young artist in silverpoint, a medium he would use again, particularly to make preparatory studies for portraits.
- III. In Antwerp, Dürer learned that Martin Luther had been arrested in Germany.
    - A. In 1520, Pope Leo X had issued a papal bull requiring Luther to retract almost half of the 95 theses critical of the Church that he'd posted on the Castle Church door in Wittenberg in 1517.
    - B. In 1521, Charles V convened the Diet of Worms to discuss the matter and summoned Luther to appear before it. When Luther refused to recant his writings, Charles issued the Edict of Worms, declaring Luther a heretic and banning him and his literature from the empire.
    - C. Frederick of Saxony, a supporter of Luther's, sequestered Luther, openly defying Charles V.

- D. Dürer, reacting to the news, wrote of his hope that Erasmus would come to Luther's aid. But Erasmus was a moderate who remained loyal to the Roman Catholic Church.
  - E. Luther broke irrevocably with the Church in Rome and became one of the founders of the Protestant Reformation. Dürer and many of his friends in Nuremberg were sympathetic to Luther's ideas of reform.
- IV. Dürer remained busy after his return to Nuremberg, though he did not produce many individual works.
- A. A 1523 woodcut of the *Last Supper* reveals how Dürer's religious beliefs were changing. Likely meant as part of a Passion series, the woodcut uses the horizontal format preferred in Netherlandish and German art.
    - 1. The lines are more severe and systematized compared with Dürer's previous works, suggesting his desire for a more classical appearance and a focus on the scene itself.
    - 2. The bread and wine of the Eucharist are emphasized through their placement in the foreground. In the same year, 1523, the Eucharistic communion was offered for the first time to the laity, one of the early innovations of the Protestant Reformation.
  - B. In 1525, the Nuremberg city council officially aligned itself with the Protestant Reformation. One of Dürer's last paintings, *The Four Holy Men*, from 1526, was a gift to his native city.
    - 1. The painting shows Saints John the Evangelist and Peter on the left and Mark and Paul on the right, with excerpts from their writings in Martin Luther's translation at the bottom.
    - 2. Dürer's image was part of a tradition of placing moralizing paintings in civic buildings, in this case, a town hall. The massive figures portray the saints as exemplars of wisdom and bravery in the face of persecution—a theme that would have great resonance during the early years of the Reformation.
    - 3. Dürer, however, never wanted to do away with all religious images, as did some of the Reformers. His *Virgin and Christ Child* of 1526 was the kind of image some reformers would attack. Dürer was probably among those who wished for the reform of one faith rather than the establishment of two.
- V. Some of the complexities of the debate sparked by the Reformation can be understood through two portraits of important citizens of Nuremberg.
- A. An engraving of 1524 shows Willibald Pirckheimer, an old friend who had just retired from the city council. He may have been the one who encouraged Dürer to take up portrait engraving in the 1520s.
    - 1. The Latin inscription under the print maintains that the intellect will live on while "all else [the body] will die"—again, the theme is of immortality through art.
    - 2. Although a Humanist, Pirckheimer was dismayed by the radical beliefs of early reformers and chose to remain in the Roman Catholic Church.
    - 3. Although earlier drawings of Pirckheimer conveyed a sense of the energy, this engraving exudes a sense of fatigue of body and, perhaps, spirit.
  - B. The portrait of *Hieronymus Holzschuher* from 1526 depicts another friend and prominent city council member, this one a devoted supporter of the Reformation.
    - 1. Dürer's preference for the sidelong glance lends a wary air to the sitter, who strikes us as a forceful figure in difficult times.
    - 2. The reflection of the window in Dürer's studio in the sitter's eyes shows Dürer's devotion to naturalism and the creation of art as document.
- VI. In the 1520s, Dürer was busy with a number of endeavors, including theoretical treatises.
- A. He wished to expound on topics such as rational theory and mathematics and its application to art.
  - B. The most important of his treatises was *Four Books on Human Proportions*. Published after his death in 1528, the manual was a signal contribution to Renaissance art theory.
- VII. Let us finish looking at the remarkable accomplishments of the leading artist of the German Renaissance with a watercolor made in 1525. It represents a terrifying dream Dürer had on June 7 of that year, a vision of a rainstorm that seemed apocalyptic, according to the painting's inscription.
- A. In a vast landscape, rain pounds the earth with fury. The image reminds us of an apocalyptic terror of our own time, the mushroom cloud of a nuclear explosion.
  - B. How one practiced Christianity was no longer clear or universal, and a Peasants' War in 1524–25 shocked many in Germany. The world seemed to be turning upside down.
  - C. The irony is that Dürer was himself a force for change in the world of art, promoting the idea of the artist as an intellectual, whose art was more about the mind than the hand.
  - D. Dürer's art reveals an extraordinary documentary sense of himself and his times, as well as his larger vision of the natural world, a wonderful example of which is his 1502 drawing of a hare.

**Works Discussed:**

**Albrecht Dürer:** *Maximilian I, Emperor of Germany*, 1518–19, pencil and watercolor, 2'5" x 2'½", Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna.

*Maximilian I, Emperor of Germany*, 1519, oil on lindenwood panel, 2'5" x 2', Kunsthistorisches Museum, Innsbruck.

*Drawing of Antwerp Harbor*, c. 1520, pen and brown ink, 8½ x 11¼", Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna.

*Erasmus of Rotterdam*, 1520, charcoal on paper, 1'2¾" x 10¾", Musée du Louvre, Paris.

*Bernard von Reesen*, 1521, oil on panel, 1'6" x 1'½", Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden.

*St. Jerome in his Cell*, 1521, oil on panel, 1'11 ½" x 1'7", Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon.

*Old Man, or Study for a Saint*, 1521, brush drawing on brown paper, 1'4¼" x 11", Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna.

*Portrait of Lucas van Leyden*, 1521, silverpoint, 9½ x 6¾", Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille.

*The Last Supper*, 1523, woodcut, 8½" x 1', Private Collection.

*The Four Holy Men*, 1526, oil on panel, each panel: 7½" x 2'6", Alte Pinakothek, Munich.

*Willibald Pirckheimer*, 1524, engraving, 7½ x 4¾", Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

*Hieronymus Holzschuher*, 1526, oil on panel, 1'8" x 1'2½", Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.

*Vision of a Cloudburst (Aquarell: Traumgesicht)*, 1525, watercolor on paper, 11¾" x 1'4¾", Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

*A Young Hare*, 1502, watercolor and gouache, 9¼ x 9", Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna.

**Essential Reading:**

Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art*, chapter 13.

Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer*, reprint ed., introduction by Jeffrey Chipps Smith.

**Supplementary Reading:**

Bartrum, ed., *Albrecht Dürer and His Legacy*.

Kurth, *The Complete Woodcuts of Albrecht Dürer*.

Strauss, ed., *The Complete Engravings, Etchings, and Drypoints of Albrecht Dürer*.

Strieder, *Albrecht Dürer: Paintings, Prints, Drawings*.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. Why would Netherlandish artists treat Dürer with such great respect?
2. Some scholars have maintained that Dürer was the first true “Renaissance” artist of northern Europe. Do you agree? Why?

## Lecture Nineteen

### Lucas Cranach as a Painter

**Scope:** Lucas Cranach (1472–1553) was one of the few artistic contemporaries of Albrecht Dürer to achieve his kind of fame. An artist with a large, active workshop, he was court painter to the electors of Saxony but worked for private patrons, as well. Like Dürer, Cranach maintained close ties to Humanist scholars. He also had good relationships with figures from both the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Reformation, as seen in his portraits of Cardinal Albrecht Brandenburg and Martin Luther, a close friend. Unlike Dürer, Cranach was not interested in the ideal human proportions promoted by Italian Renaissance artists. His figures were often elongated in form and relatively flat. He reinterpreted religious and secular subjects into a native stylistic mode that would have been familiar to German patrons and artists. Cranach was a versatile artist, equally at ease with religious subjects, mythological stories, and portraiture, as well as with new secular themes that allowed him to emphasize landscape.

#### Outline

- I. Lucas Cranach was one of the few artistic contemporaries of Albrecht Dürer's to achieve his kind of fame. A court painter to the electors of Saxony, he also worked for private patrons. A friend of Martin Luther, he helped devise a new Lutheran iconography while retaining Catholic patrons.
  - A. Born in the modern-day town of Kronach in 1472, Cranach trained with his father, also a painter. He was named court painter to Frederick the Wise, elector of Saxony, in 1505 and moved to Wittenberg.
  - B. When Elector John Frederick of Saxony was taken prisoner by Charles V in 1547, Cranach served the elector in captivity. After John Frederick was freed in 1552, Cranach moved to Weimar, where he died in 1553.
- II. An early painting by Cranach, *Saint Jerome*, shows us his originality. It is a different view of the saint than Dürer's.
  - A. Cranach's painting shows the other major representational type, the penitent saint in the wilderness.
  - B. Jerome kneels before a crucifix set on a rocky hill. The figure of Christ on the cross looks like a small, living Christ.
  - C. The obvious brushstrokes emphasize the scene's strong emotion.
  - D. Jerome lived in the desert during his years of solitary penitence, but

here, he is shown in a northern landscape, rendering the saint's penitence more understandable to a 16<sup>th</sup>-century Germanic audience.

- E. Cranach's depiction of a northern forest influenced artists near Vienna, a group called the *Danube School*.

- III. Cranach made portraits of family members for the various electors of Saxony. The marriage portraits of Henry and Katharine of Saxony suggest how he changed his style to answer the demands of court patronage.
  - A. Henry IV (the Pious), shown here, like Frederick the Wise, was a devoted adherent of Martin Luther in future years, although not when this portrait was made.
  - B. The duke and duchess are dressed resplendently in gold, green, scarlet, and black costumes. The elongated proportions show how Cranach moved away from Dürer's naturalism in depicting the human body.
  - C. These portraits also suggest gender roles. The duke's pose is assertive and expansive; the duchess's is passive and pulled inward. But the faces of both Henry and Katharine exhibit alert concentration.
- IV. Cranach painted Luther over a wide range of time. The electors of Saxony protected Luther, and he and Cranach knew each other well.
  - A. These portraits of Luther and his wife were standard, middle-class portraits. The bust- to half-length figures are dressed well but not richly.
  - B. The very flat figures are set off against a blue background.
- V. Mythological subjects became popular in 16<sup>th</sup>-century German courts. One of Cranach's most popular compositions was *Apollo and Diana in a Wooded Landscape* from 1530.
  - A. His nude gods are slim and elongated, so different from Dürer's. Apollo's beard and moustache distinguish him as a German god, not a Roman one. Diana looks almost boneless in her sinuous pose.
  - B. Cranach has placed Apollo and Diana in a forest setting, showing that his other side of German Renaissance art reinterpreted classical subjects through a native stylistic mode.
- VI. Cranach's approach to certain religious subjects was also innovative. *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* and *a Servant* shows his interest in the power of women, a popular theme in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.
  - A. Judith was an Old Testament Jewish heroine who tricked the enemy general, Holofernes, into trusting her in his tent, then slaughtered him.
  - B. Judith looks at us with aplomb yet otherwise appears to be a demure Renaissance maiden. Cranach interpreted a historical subject for contemporary times.



- C. Judith's depiction as a heroine who is comfortable decapitating her male enemy lends a sense of uneasiness to the painting, yet at the same time, the painting is sort of a fairytale depiction.
- VII.** Cranach was an important figure in the spread of new secular subjects in painting. *The Payment* echoes and transforms the Housebook Master's 15<sup>th</sup>-century print of *Unequal Lovers*.
- A. Lust and greed, two common vices, are the dominant theme. Set in an interior space, an older man grabs coins and hands them to a young woman, who leans forward in her eagerness to get the money.
- B. On the background wall are implements and trophies of the hunt. Dead birds are hung up prominently—the old man and young woman are also hunting, but for different things. It is a moralizing painting, but it's also presented with playfulness.
- VIII.** Such wit is present again in the charming *Fountain of Youth* from 1546.
- A. In the foreground of an extensive landscape is a large, rectangular pool with a fountain, topped with a statue of Venus. From the left, women arrive, undress, and enter the pool.
- As they move across the width of the pool, the old, withered women miraculously turn into young, nubile maidens. As they leave the pool, they are greeted by men, who gesture to tents serving as changing rooms.
  - After dressing, the newly young women rejoin the men and wander in a love garden or feast at a table.
- B. Ancient stories of fountains of youth were widespread in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Cranach points out the humor and poignancy of such beliefs.
- IX.** Two more portraits represent the complex world Cranach seems to have navigated so skillfully.
- A. The first, from 1525, depicts *Cardinal Albrecht of Brandenburg as St. Jerome*. This is an example of *portrait historié* (historiated portrait), which showed a contemporary individual in the role of a historical or mythological figure.
- Dürer's *St. Jerome in His Study* was the basis for this portrait. The cardinal, an opponent of Luther, clearly wanted to be linked with Saint Jerome.
  - Cranach made changes from Dürer's engraving. The orientation of the room is switched, and there are many more animals.
- B. The other, *Martin Luther and the Wittenberg Reformers*, may have been painted by Lucas Cranach the Younger, but it follows the ideas and the style of Lucas Cranach the Elder. It shows the artist's primary patron, Elector John Frederick of Saxony, with the reformers.

- In this depiction of allegiance to Protestant reformers, Luther stands behind John Frederick, the position of greatest honor. On the left are Humanist Philip Melanchthon and others.
- John Frederick's bulky frame stands as a kind of symbolic bulwark, indicating his desire to protect the reformers from threat. This forceful image evokes a time when those in power had to take a stand for the Roman Church or for the Reformation.

#### Works Discussed:

**Lucas Cranach the Elder:** *Saint Jerome in Penance*, 1502, oil on panel, 1'10" x 1'4¼", Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

*Henry, Duke of Saxony and Duchess Katharina of Mecklenburg*, 1514, oil on panel transferred to canvas, 6½" x 2'8¾", Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden.

*Martin Luther and his wife, Katharina von Bora*, 1529, oil on panel, 1'1½" x 9", Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

*Apollo and Diana in a Wooded Landscape*, 1530, oil on panel, 1'8½" x 1'2½", Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.

*Judith with the Head of Holofernes and a Servant*, c. 1537, oil on panel, 2'5½" x 1'8", Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

*The Ill-Matched Couple (The Payment)*, 1532, oil on panel, 3'6½" x 3'11", The National Museum of Fine Arts, Stockholm.

*The Fountain of Youth*, 1546, oil on panel, 3'11½" x 6½", Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.

*Cardinal Albrecht of Brandenburg as St. Jerome*, 1525, oil on panel, 3'10" x 2'6¾", Hessisches Landesmuseum, Darmstadt.

**Lucas Cranach the Elder (or possibly the Younger):** *Martin Luther and the Wittenberg Reformers*, c.1543, oil on panel, 2'3½" x 1'3½", Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey, 1926.55.

#### Essential Reading:

Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art*, chapter 14.

#### Recommended Reading:

Friedmann, *A Bestiary for Saint Jerome: Animal Symbolism in European Religious Art*, pp. 115–136.

MacCulloch, *The Reformation*.

#### Questions to Consider:

- Why would Cranach's choice of a "Germanic" style of painting have particular appeal at a German court such as Wittenberg?

2. In what ways might Cranach's art be seen as even more innovative than Dürer's?

## Lecture Twenty

### Grünwald and Altdorfer

**Scope:** Matthias Grünwald (1475/80–1528) and Albrecht Altdorfer (1480–1538) were two highly individualistic painters of the German Renaissance. They made their mark with compelling paintings that stood out for their imagination and extensive landscapes.

Grünwald received a number of significant commissions for altarpieces. The most important was the *Isenheim Altarpiece*, commissioned about 1512 to 1515 for the Monastery of Saint Anthony in Isenheim. This large, complex work shows scenes of Christ's life, death, and Resurrection, ranging from the gruesome realism of the Crucifixion to the mystical Annunciation in a garden.

Altdorfer's paintings represent the mystical orientation of 16<sup>th</sup>-century German art through the subject of landscape. He painted scenes from religious history and mythology in deeply wooded settings. His interest in conveying mood and meaning through landscape is seen in *Saint George and the Dragon* and *The Battle of Alexander*.

### Outline

- I. We have little documentary evidence about the life and career of Mathis Gothardt Neithart, traditionally called Matthias Grünwald.
  - A. Born in Würzburg about 1475/80, Grünwald was active as a painter from about 1500. Around 1510, he entered the service of the elector of Mainz, an archbishop.
  - B. He later served the next elector of Mainz, Cardinal Albrecht of Brandenburg. In the 1520s, he sided with the Protestant reformers and resigned from his position.
- II. The *Isenheim Altarpiece* was the highpoint of Grünwald's career and one of the most extraordinary altarpieces of 16<sup>th</sup>-century German art.
  - A. The large altarpiece was commissioned by Guido Guersi, head of the Monastery of Saint Anthony at Isenheim, about 1512 to 1515. Grünwald made three sets of wings for an existing shrine of statues of Saint Anthony flanked by Saints Augustine and Jerome.
  - B. The themes of the wings are the life of Saint Anthony, the monastery's patron saint, and humanity's redemption through Christ's sacrifice.
  - C. The monastery's hospital for the treatment of skin diseases must have played a role in the conception of the paintings.
  - D. The outermost view (with the wings closed) displays the Crucifixion.

Grünewald's imaginative world was part of a mystical and highly expressive strain of art in German lands.

1. This is a mystical Crucifixion because of the presence of John the Baptist, who was martyred before Christ.
  2. On the right side of the cross, blood pours from the chest of the lamb into a chalice. At left, Mary Magdalene has fallen to her knees in a pose of grief. The Virgin Mary clasps her hands as John the Evangelist supports her.
  3. The body of Christ is elongated, gray-green, covered with sores, blood dripping, fingers and face contorted with agony.
- E. On the side wings are Saint Sebastian at left and Saint Anthony Abbot at right. Sebastian was a plague saint. Saint Anthony was prayed to when someone was struck with "St. Anthony's Fire," now known as ergotism.
1. These two saints, also seen in Rogier van der Weyden's *Last Judgment*, continue a tradition in hospital altarpieces.
  2. In the *predella*, or "step," of the altarpiece, Grünewald depicted the Lamentation, again emphasizing Christ's abused body.
- F. When the altarpiece is opened to the middle position, we see depicted the *Annunciation*, the *Angelic Concert*, the *Virgin and Child*, and the *Resurrection*.
1. The iconography of each scene is not always clear to modern scholars, but the overall meaning is distinct: the coming of the redemption of humanity through the incarnation of Christ and the triumph over death and sin by his Resurrection.
  2. In the *Annunciation* scene, Gabriel visits Mary to announce that she will bear the Savior. Mary shrinks back in humility.
  3. The enigmatic *Angelic Concert* needs to be read with the scene of the *Virgin and Child*. Several angels play stringed instruments underneath an elaborate architectural porch. A crowned woman steps out of the architectural space toward the Virgin and Child, who sit in a garden.
    - a. One of the angels, green in color, has been identified by one art historian as Satan, the fallen angel.
    - b. The crowned woman may represent the Church itself, coming into being after Christ's birth.
  4. In the *Virgin and Child*, Mary holds Jesus tenderly while he grasps the rosary. The vitality of the figures here has immense appeal, as does the transcendent vision of God the Father in the sky.
  5. This transcendence climaxes with the *Resurrection*. Christ has burst out of his tomb to hover in the sky, radiant as the Sun.
- G. The final view of the altarpiece, the innermost position, shows the

original sculptural group of Saints Jerome, Anthony, and Augustine. Underneath are figures of Christ and the Twelve Apostles. Grünewald added painted wings with narratives from Saint Anthony's life.

1. On the left, the elderly Saint Anthony visits a still-older Saint Paul in a scene representing Anthony's humility.
  2. On the right, the *Temptation of Saint Anthony* shows an even wilder world of terrifying demons attacking the saint.
- H. The concept of this altarpiece was appropriate for this hospital because ergotism could produce seizures and hallucinations, which might make Grünewald's visions seem not far-fetched.
- III. The art of Albrecht Altdorfer offers a far different vision of the world, but one that also entailed an imaginative leap.
- A. Born about 1480, Altdorfer in 1505 became a citizen of Regensburg, where he would remain for the rest of his career.
  - B. Altdorfer was active as a painter, printmaker, and draughtsman from about 1504 until his death in 1538. His fame as a painter rests primarily on his history scenes set into landscape settings.
  - C. *Saint Jerome* from 1507 originally part of a diptych, was inspired by Lucas Cranach's Danube School and *Saint Jerome*. Altdorfer's painting also shows the seminude, penitent saint beating his chest with a rock while praying before a crucifix nailed to a tree.
    1. Once again, Jerome's desert retreat has been turned into a northern European forest setting.
    2. Its small size indicates that the diptych could be held in the hand for private contemplation.
  - D. *Saint George and the Dragon* from 1510, painted on parchment glued to a wood panel, is an even more romanticized scene in terms of landscape setting. George confronts a terrible dragon in an ancient-looking forest.
  - E. Altdorfer was a co-founder of the Danube School. The balance of attention shifts to the landscape itself as a carrier of meaning and mood.
  - F. This trend climaxes in *The Battle of Alexander* from 1529. Altdorfer used landscape on a grand scale, both literally and metaphorically.
    1. The painting was commissioned by Duke Wilhelm IV of Bavaria, who was preparing to go to war against the Ottoman Turks.
    2. Two vast armies seem miniscule from our viewpoint above the battlefield. The dry field is surrounded by rocks that lead the eye to a distant, European-looking city and sea and to the glowing Sun at the horizon. Darius flees in his chariot, pursued by Alexander.
    3. In the sky hangs a cartouche with a Latin inscription describing

Alexander's victory. The historical source for the painting stated that God (the Sun) triumphed in this battle, in contrast with the crescent Moon, a symbol of Islam.

- IV. Both Grünewald and Altdorfer built on naturalistic styles to convey a sense of larger meaning. They used naturalism to create a convincing perspective, communicate certain ideas, and express strong emotion.

#### Works Discussed:

**Nikolaus von Hagenau:** *Isenheim Altarpiece* (sculpted portion), c. 1505, gilded wood, 11'4" x 11' 2¼", Musée d' Unterlinden, Colmar, France.

**Matthias Grünewald:** *Isenheim Altarpiece*, painted wings, c. 1512–15, oil on panel, each wing: 8'10" x 4'7½", Musée d' Unterlinden, Colmar, France.

*Isenheim Altarpiece*, c. 1512–15, oil on panel, central panel: 8'10" x 10¾", each wing: 7'7¼" x 2'6", predella: 2'6" x 11'2¼", Musée d' Unterlinden, Colmar, France.

**Albrecht Altdorfer:** *Saint Jerome*, c. 1507, oil on panel, 1'1¼" x 8", Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen, Kassel, Germany.

*Saint George and the Dragon*, c. 1510, oil on parchment mounted on panel, 11 x 9", Alte Pinakothek, Munich.

*The Battle of Alexander (Battle of Issus)*, 1529, oil on panel, 5'2¼" x 3'11¼", Alte Pinakothek, Munich.

#### Essential Reading:

Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art*, chapters 12 and 14.

#### Supplementary Reading:

Hayum, *The Isenheim Altarpiece: God's Medicine and the Painter's Vision*.

Mellinkoff, *The Devil at Isenheim: Reflections of Popular Belief in Grünewald's Altarpiece*.

Wood, *Albrecht Altdorfer and the Origins of Landscape*.

#### Questions to Consider:

1. Was Grünewald the last German medieval artist or a true Renaissance artist?
2. How can *The Battle of Alexander* be understood as a specifically German response to the Italian Renaissance?

## Lecture Twenty-One

### 16<sup>th</sup>-Century German Woodcuts

**Scope:** Dürer's woodcuts sparked widespread interest in the possibilities of this art form. During the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, a number of German artists—including Lucas Cranach, Albrecht Altdorfer, and Hans Burgkmair—used woodcuts in inventive ways. Some of their works can be read as a commentary on Dürer's own achievements. Chiaroscuro woodcuts, which used more than one wood block to develop an image, introduced color and a wider range of tones into a medium that previously used only black lines. Artists continued to experiment with different printing techniques. Some drawings were preparatory studies, but many were likely made as collector's items. In contrast to older woodcuts, which were inexpensive and widely sold, these new woodcuts were precious commissioned works.

#### Outline

- I. Dürer's success as a designer prompted other artists, especially painters, to take up the medium. The result was a "golden age" of woodcut design in German-speaking lands during the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.
  - A. Lucas Cranach's *Adam and Eve* woodcut from 1509 explicitly refers to Dürer's engraving from five years earlier.
    1. The print is busy with detail and humor. Among the animals is a lion in the foreground instead of Dürer's cat. In place of Dürer's classical nudes, we have a classical Eve and an elongated Adam.
    2. Eve seems to be the primary cause of the Fall, a theological position held by some in the Catholic Church at the time.
  - B. Albrecht Altdorfer also designed woodcuts, including a set of 40 tiny woodcuts of the *Fall and Redemption of Man* from 1513.
    1. The tiny scale required skill from both the cutter and the designer, eased by Altdorfer's simple parallel lines.
    2. As one print, *Descent from the Cross*, shows, the small scale makes us engage with the subject of the print.
  - C. Hans Burgkmair (1473–1531) worked as a painter and printmaker in Augsburg. He took up woodcut design in the early 1490s.
    1. About 1508, Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian commissioned Burgkmair to design a series of prints. The artist contributed 118 of the 251 woodcut designs for the *Weisskunig (White King)*, an account of the political and diplomatic events in Maximilian's life.
      - a. *Weisskunig in a Painter's Workshop* is an intriguing commentary on the relationship between artist and monarch.

- b. The White King stands over the shoulder of a painter, pointing at a curious composition of animals and armor.
  - 2. Burgkmair's style was probably easier for cutters to execute. He relied mainly on short, closely spaced parallel lines and simplified the description of objects.
- II. One of the most significant developments in 16<sup>th</sup>-century woodcuts was the use of printed color.
  - A. Printed color woodcuts were attractive because they could mimic chiaroscuro drawing, which used colored paper and colored pigments.
  - B. Dürer was among the first German artists to use this technique.
  - C. The color enhanced three-dimensional forms and allowed for a wider range of tones. The color of the paper established a middle tone. Darker tones were added in ink, and lighter ones were added with white *heightening*, a thick pigmented substance.
  - D. Cranach made chiaroscuro drawings as finished works. His elaborate compositions included *St. Martin Dividing His Cloak*, in which we see Martin, a wealthy young man, impulsively dividing his cloak to share it with a poor beggar.
- III. Printmakers saw the potential to make individual impressions that would look like chiaroscuro drawings. In 1507–08, the first true experiments with color printing arose, pioneered by Cranach and Burgkmair.
  - A. A 1508 letter from Conrad Peutinger, a Humanist scholar, described a picture, printed in gold and silver, of an equestrian. This work was likely Cranach's *St. George and the Dragon*.
  - B. A sheet of paper, tinted with a color wash, would be printed with a line block that established the essential contours of objects and some internal modeling. Next, the same sheet would be printed with a second block for highlights. Cranach then scraped off some of the tint of the paper to create a lighter horizon line.
  - C. Burgkmair's *St. George and the Dragon* in the first state (that is, before he made changes to the design) exists in only two impressions. One of them, like Cranach's, was on blue paper.
    - 1. Burgkmair printed the line block for the dark lines first, then a second block for highlights in silver.
    - 2. Soon, he reversed the process, printing the highlight block first, then the line block for the overall image.
  - D. Cranach and others developed a form of color woodcut in which one or more blocks would print areas of tone only, not as line. Plain white paper could be used instead of tinted paper.
- IV. Albrecht Altdorfer's *Die Schöne Maria of von Regensburg* reproduced an

image of the Beautiful Virgin, a Byzantine icon from the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

- A. From 1519 to 1522, a series of events in Regensburg were understood as miracles performed by this image. Pilgrims came to worship before the painting, creating a demand for "souvenirs" of it.
        - B. Altdorfer designed seven different prints showing the Beautiful Virgin in various guises.
        - C. Altdorfer's color woodcut required six blocks to print. It would have been produced in small numbers and would have been very expensive.
- V. The development of color printing, however, did not cause the demise of hand-colored woodcuts. Burgkmair's woodcut *Virgin and Child with a Round Arch* of 1508 shows monumental forms of the Virgin and Child.
  - A. The classical architecture is a reminder of Burgkmair's time in Italy.
  - B. An impression from the first state was hand-colored. The effect is like a manuscript illumination or a small panel painting.
- VI. The work of Hans Baldung can be understood as a critique of some of Dürer's prints and the artistic theory behind them.
  - A. Baldung (c. 1484/85–1545) moved as a child to Strasbourg. His relatives were educated professionals. By 1503, he had entered Dürer's studio, where he gained great favor and the nickname Grien ("green"). Baldung began to design woodcuts in 1505.
  - B. Baldung returned to Strasbourg in 1509. Active as a painter and printmaker, he first depicted religious scenes but turned increasingly to classical themes, ancient history, allegories, and secular subjects.
  - C. *Adam and Eve*, or *The Fall of Man*, a chiaroscuro woodcut from 1511, concentrates on the Fall as an event coincident with human sexuality.
    - 1. Adam's and Eve's bodies intertwine erotically, and Adam takes hold of Eve's left breast.
    - 2. Eve takes on the role of primary sinner. The serpent in the foreground almost leers down on the figures.
  - D. Another print, *The Bewitched Groom*, defies a singular explanation. A groom lies dead or unconscious on a stable floor. A horse looks balefully toward the groom, while an old crone with a bared breast holds up a torch at a window. Did she bewitch the groom or the horse?
    - 1. Baldung plays with the Renaissance fascination for rational perspective systems. The groom falls in an admirably foreshortened pose that contrasts with the irrationality of the scene.
    - 2. Although this print conveys no one clear meaning, it seems to be a visual commentary on Dürer's prints and faith in humans' rational creations.

## Works Discussed:

**Lucas Cranach the Elder:** *Adam and Eve in Paradise*, 1509, woodcut, 1'1¼" x 9¼", The Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

*St. Martin Dividing His Cloak*, 1504, chiaroscuro ink and wash drawing, 7¼ x 5", Staatliche Graphische Sammlungen, Munich.

*St. George and the Dragon*, c. 1507, chiaroscuro woodcut, 9¼ x 6¼", Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

**Albrecht Altdorfer:** *The Fall and Redemption of Man: Descent from the Cross*, c. 1513, woodcut, 3 x 2", © The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Gift of the Print Club of Cleveland, 1932.330.31, Cleveland.

*Die Schöne Maria von Regensburg*, c. 1519–21, color woodcut from six blocks, 1'1½" x 9½", Stiftkirche Unserer Lieben Frau, Regensburg.

**Hans Burgkmair the Elder:** *Weisskunig in a Painter's Workshop*, c. 1518, woodcut, 8½ x 7¾", Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.

*St. George and the Dragon*, 1508, chiaroscuro woodcut, 1¾" x 9", Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

*Virgin and Child with a Round Arch*, 1508, hand-colored woodcut, 10¾ x 7¼", Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

**Hans Baldung Grien:** *Adam and Eve (or The Fall of Man)*, 1511, chiaroscuro woodcut, 1'2¾" x 10¼", Rosenwald Collection, Image © 2006 Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

*The Bewitched Groom*, c. 1544, woodcut, 1'1¼" x 7¼", Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin.

## Essential Reading:

Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art*, chapter 14.

Landau and Parshall, *The Renaissance Print, 1470–1550*, chapter 5.

## Supplementary Reading:

Bartrum, ed., *Albrecht Dürer and His Legacy*.

Bartrum, *German Renaissance Prints, 1490–1550*.

Marrow and Shestack, eds., *Hans Baldung Grien: Prints and Drawings*.

Talbot and Shestack, *Prints and Drawings of the Danube School*.

## Questions to Consider:

1. What aesthetic advantages did woodcuts offer over engravings for artists of the early 16<sup>th</sup> century?
2. Why was the development of color printing techniques so avidly pursued?

## Lecture Twenty-Two 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Intaglio Prints

**Scope:** The most important development in printmaking with metal plates in the early-16<sup>th</sup> century was etching. Invented around 1500 by Daniel Hopfer, a designer of armor, the technique involved a more complex process than engraving but allowed greater freedom of line work and required less technical proficiency in designing an image. Such artists as Albrecht Dürer and Albrecht Altdorfer experimented with etching while continuing to make drypoint and other engravings. This period saw the rise of different subjects beyond the religious and classical images so prevalent during the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Prints depicting architecture, non-narrative landscapes, and secular subjects were made, including Sebald Beham's tiny, highly detailed engravings. Members of the middle class, as well as political rulers, began print collections, reflecting the changing status and use of art.

## Outline

- I. The most important development in intaglio printmaking with metal plates in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century was etching. Artists also continued to make drypoint and other engravings.
  - A. Lucas Cranach's seven engravings include three depictions of Martin Luther; we see *Martin Luther as an Augustinian Monk* of 1520.
    1. In 1520, Pope Leo X issued a papal bull demanding that Luther retract half of the 95 Theses he had posted in Wittenberg. This was a time of great tension between Luther and the Catholic Church.
    2. Cranach emphasized Luther's role as a reformer from the inside by showing him as a monk, looking thin and intense in his zeal.
    3. The print's function was more political than artistic in nature. It was likely made to disseminate Luther's image quickly at the time of his greatest conflict with the Church.
  - B. Cranach ultimately was known more for his woodcut prints, but his engravings of Luther were important to the rise of Protestantism.
- II. Drypoint uses a metal plate but a different kind of needle than in engraving. The technique produces beautiful images but only a limited number of good impressions.
  - A. Albrecht Dürer was among the rare 16<sup>th</sup>-century engravers to make entire images with drypoint. He made only three, including *Saint Jerome by the Pollard Willow*.
    1. Drypoint doesn't emphasize the three-dimensional quality of forms but allows the interpretation of a subject through tone.



2. Jerome is seen as both a penitent saint and a scholar. He is in harmony with nature through his devotion to God.
  3. Because only a limited number of prints was possible, such an image was likely made for a small audience who could appreciate its subtleties and subject.
- B. Rembrandt von Rijn was likely inspired by Dürer's prints for his own drypoint depiction of Saint Jerome.
- III. Other artists were more interested in the aesthetic possibilities of a new intaglio process: etching. Dürer experimented with it in the 1510s and was the first printmaker to date an etching in 1515.
- A. In etching, a waxy *ground* is applied to a metal plate; then, an etching needle is used to pull through the ground where lines are desired. The plate is put in an acid bath, which eats away where the ground has been pulled. The plate is cleaned, inked, and run through a printing press.
  - B. Daniel Hopfer (c. 1470–1536) is credited with inventing etching on iron plates. A citizen of Augsburg, he adapted the process of working with acid to etch designs into armor in order to make prints on metal plates.
    1. Unlike the difficult, time-consuming process of engraving, etching allows the artist to draw quick and varied lines directly on a plate. In Hopfer's *Crucifixion*, the effects of that can be seen, for instance, in the anatomy of the three figures on the crosses: Jesus, the good thief, and the bad thief.
    2. Hopfer's image is full of detail. He loves to make contrasts of light and dark, good and bad. It's a little gory; we could even say it's a little overdone, but it has a powerful impact.
  - C. Albrecht Altdorfer used the etching needle to record the prelude to a disturbing event in Regensburg. In 1519, the city council, of which Altdorfer was a member, expelled all Jews.
    1. Economic difficulties in the city that year were blamed on the Jews. The Regensburg council expelled the Jews with only a week's notice. After that, the synagogue and Jewish ghetto were destroyed.
    2. Before the destruction of the synagogue, Altdorfer made two etchings, including the *Interior of the Regensburg Synagogue*.
    3. It's unclear why Altdorfer etched these images, among the first pure architectural depictions in print.
- IV. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, etching was well matched for the subject of landscape. The organic quality of the etched line suited the representation of nature.
- A. Altdorfer pioneered this use of etching, making nine landscape etchings in the early 1520s. They are the first nonnarrative landscape

prints made in Europe.

1. *The Great Landscape with the Water Mill* features free, interrupted lines that suggest growth itself and capture atmospheric effects.
  2. Just as chiaroscuro woodcuts imitated the appearance of chiaroscuro drawings, landscape etchings could look like landscape drawings in watercolor and pen.
  3. *Landscape with a Large Pine* is intriguing for its composition, which matches near and far elements.
- B. About a generation after Altdorfer made the first landscape etchings, Augustin Hirschvogel (1503–1553) further contributed to this genre. A native of Nuremberg, Hirschvogel worked as a cartographer and printmaker, making 35 landscape etchings.
1. *Landscape with the Conversion of Saul* from 1545 is a religious scene. The figures are tiny within this vast setting. The print is full of rich, varied lines that suggest organic nature.
  2. In *Courtyard of a Castle* from 1546, the blank paper stands for a bright sky, broken by only two trees and a few buildings. This seems as close to "art for art's sake" as one can imagine for the 16<sup>th</sup> century.
- V. Print collection became a hobby in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, an affordable way of engaging with the wider world.
- A. Extensive print collections belonged to princes and other noblemen, but even members of the middle class might own a number of prints.
  - B. Subjects were changing, too. Sixteenth-century prints were less religious than those of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.
- VI. Another avenue of artistic endeavor, the virtuosic miniature engraving, arose as an art form in this period. Sebald Beham (1500–1550) was one of several engravers in Nuremberg later nicknamed the "Little Masters" because they worked on a very small scale. Beham eventually settled in Frankfurt.
- A. *Lady and Death*, from 1541, is typical of Beham's small scale and secular subject matter. Beham had etched an almost identical composition the year before that depicted a fool instead of death. Here, he combined the imagery of death with that of a fool through the fool's cap.
  - B. Beham's commercial approach to printmaking points to coming changes in the use of the medium, as more prints reproduced existing images.

## Works Discussed:

**Lucas Cranach the Elder:** *Martin Luther as an Augustinian Monk*, 1520, engraving, 7¼ x 5¾", Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna.

**Albrecht Dürer:** *St. Jerome by the Pollard Willow*, 1512, drypoint, 8 3/16 x 7 5/16", Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Anna Mitchell Richards Fund, 37.1296, Boston.

**Daniel Hopfer:** *Crucifixion (The Calvary)*, early 16<sup>th</sup> century, etching, 1'1¾" x 8¾", Photo © 2007, Detroit Institute of Arts, Gift of Mrs. James E. Scripps (09. 1S606), Detroit.

**Albrecht Altdorfer:** *Interior of the Regensburg Synagogue*, 1519, etching on iron, 6¾ x 5", British Museum, London.

*The Great Landscape with the Watermill*, c. 1521–22, etching, 7 x 9¼", Alisa Mellon Bruce Fund, Image © 2007 Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

*Landscape with a Large Pine*, c. 1520–23, etching with transparent washes, 9 x 7", Kunstsammlungen der Veste Coburg, Germany.

**Augustin Hirschvogel:** *Landscape with the Conversion of Saul (St. Paul)*, 1545, etching, 4 x 10¼", British Museum, London.

*Courtyard of a Castle*, 1546, etching, 5½ x 8¼", Rosenwald Collection, Image © 2007 Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

**Sebald Beham:** *Lady and Death*, 1541, engraving, 3 x 2", Musée Condé, Chantilly, France.

## Essential Reading:

Landau and Parshall. *The Renaissance Print, 1470–1550*, chapter 6.

## Supplementary Reading:

Bartrum, ed., *Albrecht Dürer and His Legacy*.

Bartrum, *German Renaissance Prints, 1490–1550*.

Dackerman, *Painted Prints: The Revelation of Color*.

Goddard, *The World in Miniature: Engravings by the German Little Masters, 1500–1550*.

Talbot and Shestack, *Prints and Drawings of the Danube School*.

Wood, *Albrecht Altdorfer and the Origins of Landscape*.

## Questions to Consider:

1. Is the creation of very small engravings and woodcuts, such as those by Beham and Altdorfer, a reflection of increased interest in the 16<sup>th</sup> century in the role of the artist, not just in the final work of art?
2. Does the rise in popularity of landscape subjects in prints reflect any change in the function of prints during their second century of creation in Europe?

## Lecture Twenty-Three Holbein the Younger in Switzerland

**Scope:** Although Hans Holbein the Younger (c. 1497–1543) aspired to be a painter of religious history, he is best known today as a portraitist. Much of this German-Swiss artist's career was shaped by the religious and political turmoil of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Holbein worked in Basel, painting portraits and religious works and designing a woodcut series of the *Dance of Death*. The role of religious images was questioned during the early Protestant Reformation in Switzerland. Holbein left in 1526 for Antwerp, then England. In England, statesman and scholar Sir Thomas More was both a patron for Holbein and a contact for other patrons, who commissioned portraits. Despite his success in England, in 1528, Holbein returned to Basel. However, with religious works still under attack, he returned to England in 1532.

## Outline

- I. Hans Holbein the Younger went to great lengths to promote his career as a religious painter, but today, he is best known for his portraits.
  - A. Born in Augsburg, Holbein trained with his father, painter Hans Holbein the Elder. The family moved by 1515 to Basel.
  - B. In 1516, Holbein made his first surviving paintings, portraits of Basel burgomaster Jacob Meyer and his second wife. The awarding of this prestigious commission to such a young artist indicated early awareness of Holbein's talents.
  - C. From 1519 to 1526, Holbein received significant commissions for religious paintings, portraits, and justice scenes in the town hall.
  - D. *Dead Christ* was listed in the 1586 inventory of the family of Humanist scholar Bonifacius Amerbach.
    1. Holbein likely had seen Grünewald's *Isenheim Altarpiece*. While Grünewald concentrated on Christ's suffering, Holbein emphasized the physical facts of death.
    2. The painting was meant as a meditation on Christ's personal sacrifice and a contrast with the miracle of the Resurrection.
    3. It reveals Holbein's compelling naturalism, including a depiction of space that emphasizes the three-dimensionality of objects. Yet this was a product of imagination, not replication.
  - E. A 1523 portrait of Desiderius Erasmus, the Dutch churchman and Humanist scholar, is one of three Holbein portraits of Erasmus.
    1. Erasmus was famous throughout Europe for his Christian scholarship. Depictions of the scholarly Saint Jerome stand as

precursors to Holbein's portraits of Erasmus.

2. This portrait depicts Erasmus at work, emphasizing not just physical likeness but character and personality.
3. The profile pose seen here was considered the noblest pose in portraiture.
4. These kinds of portraits were often sent around Europe as tokens of friendship from one Humanist scholar to another.

II. Holbein's most famous woodcuts from this period are the *Dance of Death* series, which convey rich details about daily life in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

- A. The *danse macabre* ("dance of death"), a theme in the late medieval period, emphasized the equality of all humans in the face of death.
- B. *The Rich Man* shows death—portrayed as a skeleton throughout the series—stealing coins. A rich man throws up his arms in alarm, wishing to protect his hoard.
- C. *The Nun* shows a nun praying but distracted by an attractive young man kneeling on her bed. The hourglass indicates that it is too late to repent.
- D. Holbein pokes fun at the foibles of high and low, of secular and religious figures. Yet there is poignancy in several images.

III. Religious and social tensions arose in the early 1520s in Basel. In 1526, Holbein left Basel for two years, traveling to England by way of Antwerp.

- A. In England, Humanist and statesman Sir Thomas More became a patron and provided contacts for other patrons.
- B. More sat for Holbein in 1527. The resulting portrait is one of only 11 for which both the preparatory drawing and the final portrait survive.
  1. The chalk study, a close-up of More's head and bust, shows Holbein's light touch and accuracy.
  2. In the painted portrait, More's figure is extended to half-length, and he is given an impressive background of green drapery. The gold chain of office and rich dress are impressive as well.
  3. More's pose lends stability to the image and increase his strong physical presence. Yet the level of detail is extreme.
- C. Another English patron was Sir Henry Guildford, Comptroller of the Royal Household. Guildford commissioned portraits of himself and his wife from Holbein in 1527.
  1. In the preparatory drawing for *Mary Wotton, Lady Guildford*, the sitter's gaze is shifted to the left and the corners of her mouth are raised, as if she sees something amusing.
  2. Holbein's preparatory drawings have tremendous appeal, with their telling details and fresh characterization.

3. In the final painting, Lady Guildford looks directly at the viewer, and her mouth has been straightened.
4. In *Sir Henry Guildford*, the sitter's physical size conveys his importance. The composition cuts off both elbows, as if Guildford was too big to be contained by a painting.
5. Guildford wears the Order of the Garter, predecessor to the Order of the Golden Fleece. Holbein used real gold to help depict the sitter's jewelry and gold-embroidered garments.

D. One of the most intriguing portraits of Holbein's first stay in England is *Portrait of a Woman with Squirrel and Starling*.

1. The sitter may be Anne Lovell. A squirrel was part of her family coat of arms. Her father owned property in the village of East Harling, which if spoken quickly, sounds like "starling."
2. A pensive-looking woman is shown in a pose Holbein used frequently for women: hands crossed in front, body and head turned to a three-quarter view.

IV. Despite success in England, Holbein was not offered a position at court. He returned to Basel in 1528. He remained there for four years.

- A. The *Meyer Madonna* is a large painting commissioned by former burgomaster Jakob Meyer zum Hasen.
  1. Infrared reflectography has revealed that portrait drawings of Meyer, his second wife, and their daughter were made while the painting was already underway. In the final work, the poses were changed, and the daughter's appearance was updated.
  2. The crowned Virgin as queen of heaven and Virgin of Mercy protects the Meyer family under her cloak. Meyer kneels on one side of the Virgin and Child; his wife, daughter, and deceased wife, on the other. The toddler must be Saint John the Baptist. The other boy is harder to identify.
  3. Leonardo da Vinci's *Madonna of the Rocks* may have been an important influence for this painting.
  4. In this strongly three-dimensional rendering, the Virgin is a larger, grander figure than almost any before in northern European art. As the Virgin of Mercy, she serves as an intercessor for Meyer and his family, who were Catholic, at a difficult time in Basel. This was Holbein's last major religious painting.
- B. Holbein's 1528 portrait of his own family, without himself, suggests uneasiness or wariness.
  1. The children, Katharina and Philipp, look warily to the right. Wife Elsbeth looks down with a resigned expression.
  2. Although it is not appropriate to project 21<sup>st</sup>-century ideas of family life onto the past, this painting nonetheless makes a

haunting impression.

- V. The Protestant Reformation took on more extreme forms in Switzerland than in most of Germany, and the role of religious artworks came under attack. A wave of iconoclasm in 1528–1529 made clear that there would be no more commissions for large religious paintings. The town council offered Holbein an annual pension, but he left Basel and his family to return to England.

#### Works Discussed:

**Hans Holbein the Younger:** *Dead Christ*, c. 1521–22, oil on panel, 1' x 6'6¾", Kunstmuseum, Basel.

*Portrait of Desiderius Erasmus*, 1523, oil on panel, 1'5" x 1'1", Musée du Louvre, Paris.

*Dance of Death: The Rich Man*, 1524–26, woodcut, 3 x 2", Location not indicated.

*Dance of Death: The Nun*, 1524–26, woodcut, 3 x 2", Private Collection.

*Sir Thomas More*, 1527, oil on panel, 2'5½" x 1'11¼", Frick Collection, New York.

*Sir Thomas More*, c. 1527, black and colored chalks on paper, 1'3¾" x 11¾", The Royal Collection, Windsor, England.

*Mary Wotton, Lady Guildford*, c. 1527, black and colored chalks, 1'9¼" x 1'3¾", Kupferstichkabinett, Öffentliche Kunstsammlung, Basel.

*Mary Wotton, Lady Guildford*, 1527, oil on panel, 2'10½" x 2'3 13/16" Saint Louis Art Museum, Saint Louis.

*Sir Henry Guildford*, 1527, oil on panel, 2'8½" x 2'2¼", The Royal Collection © 2007, HM Queen Elizabeth II, Windsor, England.

*Portrait of a Woman with Squirrel and Starling*, 1527–28, oil on panel, 1'9¼" x 1'3¾", National Gallery, London.

*Virgin and Child with Burgomaster Jakob Meyer zum Hasen and His Family (Meyer Madonna)*, c. 1526–32, oil on panel, 4'9½" x 3'4", Schlossmuseum, Darmstadt.

*Portrait of the Artist's Wife and Their Two Elder Children (The Artist's Family)*, c. 1528/29, oil on paper on wood panel, 2'6¼" x 2'1¼" Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel, Martin Bühler (photo).

**Leonardo da Vinci:** *Madonna of the Rocks*, c. 1483, oil on canvas, 6'6¼" x 4', Musée du Louvre, Paris.

#### Essential Reading:

Foister. *Holbein and England*.

Snyder. *Northern Renaissance Art*, chapter 15.

#### Supplementary Reading:

Bartrum, *German Renaissance Prints, 1490–1550*.

Bätschmann and Griener, *Hans Holbein*.

Buck, *Hans Holbein, 1497/98–1543*.

Buck and Sander, *Hans Holbein the Younger: Painter at the Court of Henry VIII*.

Müller, *Hans Holbein the Younger: The Years in Basel, 1515–1532*.

Roskill and Hand, eds., *Hans Holbein: Paintings, Prints, and Reception*.

#### Questions to Consider:

1. Why would England seem to Holbein like an advantageous place to work?
2. Do you think that Holbein intended his own family's portrait to seem melancholy in mood, or is that interpretation too modern?

## Lecture Twenty-Four

### Holbein the Younger in England, 1532–1543

**Scope:** After returning to England in 1532, Hans Holbein received portrait commissions from Henry VIII and his court, as well as from German merchants. His most spectacular painting from the early 1530s was an ambitious portrayal of two French ambassadors to England. As one of the king's painters, Holbein created iconic images of Henry VIII, his son, and at least two of his wives. Much in demand, he painted nearly 25 percent of the English peers of the day, an astonishing output. Henry VIII was the country's religious, as well as political, leader. Under his reign, Holbein designed the woodcut title page for the Coverdale Bible, the first full-length English translation of the Bible. Holbein's personal life remains a mystery, but he clearly used his talents and adaptability to ensure his artistic success during a time of political turmoil.

#### Outline

- I. Hans Holbein's return to England in 1532 forced a change in his patronage.
  - A. Sir Thomas More resigned as Lord Chancellor in 1532 and was put to death in 1535 for refusing to accept the legality of Henry VIII's marriage to Anne Boleyn and the legitimacy of their children.
  - B. Most of Holbein's clients in 1532–1533 were German merchants of the Hanseatic League.
  - C. The *Portrait of Hermann von Wedigh* shows a German merchant in rich colors. An inscription tells us the sitter's age and the portrait date, 1532.
    1. Von Wedigh looks at us coolly. He is expensively dressed and wears a ring with the Von Wedigh coat of arms.
    2. The compositional type derives from the professional portrait of the scholar in his study.
- II. Holbein's most spectacular painting from the early 1530s is *The Ambassadors*, which provides a dazzling display of Holbein's talents.
  - A. The painting depicts Jean de Dinteville, the French ambassador to the English court, at left and Georges de Selve, a French bishop who visited England, at right.
  - B. Such full-length, life-sized portraits were normally painted only for royal commissions. The rich colors and textures seem to duplicate their real-life models. The fabulously dressed figures meet the viewer's eye with steady gazes.

- C. Both men rest an arm on a table with a shelf below. The musical instruments, globes, and measuring tools suggest their interests.
- D. Between the two men is an anamorphic, or purposely distorted, image of a skull.
- E. Some of the portrait's symbolic meaning remains elusive, but it implies human learning and reason and reflects the contemporary religious environment.
- F. The painting is an allegorical friendship portrait with a message about the dangers of discord in view of the brevity of human life.

- III. Holbein continued to design woodcuts, including the title page of the Coverdale Bible (named for its translator), the first full-length English translation of the Bible, published in 1535.
  - A. The commission for the title page may have been given to Holbein through Thomas Cromwell, the English Reformation's guiding spirit.
  - B. The title page emphasizes the distinction between the law of the Old Testament and the grace of the New Testament.
    1. At the top left, Adam and Eve represent the beginning of the necessity of law, while Christ stands for God's grace. Moses is set against Christ preaching to the Apostles.
    2. In the next level, the prophet Esdras speaks to the Jews he helped lead out of the Babylonian Captivity, while opposite him, the Apostles spread the word of the Gospel.
    3. At the bottom, Henry VIII gives the new Bible to the English bishops.
  - C. This woodcut spoke directly to the situation of the English church, which rejected much of Lutheran thought.
- IV. Holbein, listed as a king's painter in 1536, played a prominent role in royal portraiture. In 1537, he produced a large-scale wall painting for Whitehall Palace of Henry VII, Henry VIII, Elizabeth of York, and Jane Seymour.
  - A. This painting proclaimed the centrality of the Tudor dynasty in England.
  - B. A fire destroyed the painting in 1698; however, two copies and a large cartoon (close to a full-scale preparatory drawing) survive.
    1. The cartoon shows Henry VIII in a three-quarters pose. However, the copies' nearly frontal pose and full frontal head became the standard for other images of the Tudor court.
    2. The life-sized figures are shown with a plaque extolling the Tudors against a background of Italianate Renaissance decoration.
  - C. A related small portrait of Henry VIII is precious for its use of real gold to depict the fabric of the king's luxurious attire. The forcefulness

of Henry's personality comes through. He looks at us with a lack of trust.

- D. In a related preparatory drawing and a panel painting, Jane Seymour's pose suggests modesty, but her royal status is indicated by sumptuous dress and jewelry.
- V. Nearly 100 preparatory drawings for portraits ended up in the collection of Henry VIII after Holbein's death. Holbein had painted nearly 25 percent of the English peers of the day. This book of drawings had left the royal collection by the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, but was later reacquired by the crown.
- VI. The portrait of Edward, Prince of Wales, was likely given to Henry VIII for New Year 1539, when Edward was one year old.
  - A. His frontal head echoes the portrait of his father. His gesture with his right hand seems commanding for a toddler. Edward is dressed in dazzling attire. He looks down, which seems appropriate for a child.
  - B. Latin verses praise Henry VIII as a model for his son. This painting is one in a series of dynastic images promoted by the king.
- VII. In addition to work for the king, Holbein took on other commissions. Thomas Howard, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Norfolk, was Lord Treasurer and Earl Marshal of England. The two batons he holds in his portrait indicate his offices.
  - A. The three-quarter-length, life-sized portrait was normally reserved for those of very high office.
  - B. Norfolk is shown wearing the Order of the Garter over his ermine-lined coat. His face is that of a wary man who had survived decades of political intrigue as an uncle of the two queens beheaded by Henry VIII.
- VIII. A drawing from about 1542–43 bears an inscription stating that it is a portrait of Holbein. The man looks wary, with one eyebrow raised and his gaze focused sharply. If this is Holbein, what do we know of him?
  - A. He was respected in England and Switzerland. The council of Basel implored him to return. He made one last brief visit in 1538, then returned to England.
  - B. Erasmus thought Holbein was an opportunist. The abandonment of his family in Basel is distasteful to our contemporary standards.
  - C. We also must remember the difficulties of pursuing a painter's career in the 1520s and 1530s, when the traditional role of art was challenged in Europe. Holbein used his wits, talents, and adaptability to succeed.

## Works Discussed:

**Hans Holbein the Younger:** *Portrait of Hermann von Wedigh*, 1532, oil on panel, 1'4 5/8" x 1'3/4", Bequest of Edward S. Harkness, 1940 (50.135.4), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

*The Ambassadors*, 1533, oil on oak panel, 6'9½" x 6'10½", National Gallery of Art, London.

*Henry VII and Henry VIII*, 1536–37, ink and watercolor, 8'5½" x 4'7", National Portrait Gallery, London.

*Portrait of King Henry VIII*, c. 1534–36, oil on panel, 11 x 8", Museo-Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid.

*Jane Seymour*, 1536–37, chalk, ink, and metalpoint on paper, 1'7¾" x 11¼", The Royal Collection © 2007, HM Queen Elizabeth II.

*Jane Seymour*, 1537, oil on panel, 2'1¾" x 1'4", Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

*Edward VI as a Child*, 1538, oil on panel, 1'10 3/8" x 1'5 3/8", Andrew W. Mellon Collection, Image © 2007 Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

*Thomas Howard, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Norfolk*, c. 1539/40, oil on panel, 2'7½" x 2¼", The Royal Collection © 2007, HM Queen Elizabeth II.

*Self-Portrait*, c. 1542–43, colored pastels on paper, 1½" x 10¼", Uffizi, Florence.

**Hans Holbein the Younger** (designer): *Coverdale Bible, Title Page*, 1535, woodcut, Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library, New York.

**Remigius van Leemput (after Holbein):** *Henry VII, Elizabeth of York, Henry VIII and Jane Seymour (The Whitehall Mural)*, mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, The Royal Collection © 2007, HM Queen Elizabeth II.

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Snyder. *Northern Renaissance Art*, chapter 15.

## Supplementary Reading:

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Bätschmann and Griener, *Hans Holbein*.

Buck and Sander, *Hans Holbein the Younger: Painter at the Court of Henry VIII*.

Foister, Roy, and Wyld; *Making and Meaning: Holbein's Ambassadors*.

Roskill and Hand, eds., *Hans Holbein: Paintings, Prints, and Reception*.

Müller, *Hans Holbein the Younger: The Years in Basel, 1515–1532*.



### Questions to Consider:

1. How did portraiture change in the century between Jan van Eyck and Hans Holbein?
2. Why do you think Jean de Dinteville wished to have such a large painting of himself and his friend Georges de Selve? What might such a portrait mean to the patron?

### Biographical Notes

**Aertsen, Pieter** (1507/8–75). Netherlandish painter from Amsterdam. Aertsen's production of large-scale market and kitchen scenes was unprecedented in painting. He also translated themes of peasant life into painting that had formerly been found only in graphic art.

**Cardinal Albrecht** (1495–1545). Elector of Brandenburg, archbishop-elect of Mainz. He became a cardinal in 1518 and actively opposed the Protestant Reformation. He nonetheless patronized such artists as Lucas Cranach, who was associated with the Reformation, as well as Albrecht Dürer and Matthias Grünewald.

**Alexander the Great** (356–323 B.C.). Macedonian monarch and patron. He invaded Asia in 334 B.C. and defeated the Persian emperor Darius at the Battle of Issus in 333 B.C. His favorite court artist was the painter Apelles.

**Altdorfer, Albrecht** (c. 1480–1538). German painter, draughtsman, and printmaker. He was one of the most important artists of the group characterized as the Danube School, which emphasized landscape in art. Altdorfer made what are perhaps the first autonomous landscape paintings in Europe. Most of Altdorfer's engravings are diminutive in scale; he initiated the trend of making such small engravings that became popular in 16<sup>th</sup>-century Germany.

**Don Fernando Alvarez de Toledo y Pimentel, Third Duke of Alba** (1507–82). Governor of the Spanish Netherlands from 1567 to 1573, where he was known as the "Iron Duke." His governorship, beginning after the iconoclastic riots of 1566, was almost a military occupation, and he instituted a tribunal to punish rebels and try to extinguish heresy, that is, Protestantism. Thousands died during his time as head of the government, and his imposition of a new sales tax of 10 percent angered even loyal Catholic Netherlanders. Open warfare thus began in 1568, which the duke combated forcefully but with mixed success.

**Apelles** (active late 4<sup>th</sup>–early 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.). Greek painter. The most renowned classical painter, he was an art theoretician as well. He frequently painted Philip II of Macedon and Alexander the Great, who according to Pliny, allowed only Apelles to paint him.

**Baerze, Jacques de** (active c. 1384–99). South Netherlandish sculptor. He was best known for two carved altarpieces commissioned by Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, for the charterhouse of Champmol. Both altarpieces were gilded and painted by Melchior Broederlam.

**Baldung, Hans, called Grien** (1484/5–1545). German painter and printmaker. In 1503, he entered Albrecht Dürer's workshop in Nuremberg as a journeyman and proved to be the master's most innovative follower. He rejected Dürer's emphasis on an art formed by Rational Humanism and often chose supernatural

themes or erotic interpretations of subjects that conveyed skepticism about human morality.

**Beham, Sebald** (1500–50). German engraver, etcher, and designer of woodcuts. He worked on a small scale and was influenced by Altdorfer and Dürer, as well as his brother Barthel.

**Bellini, Giovanni** (c. 1431/6–1516). Italian painter, best known for his religious art. He was among the first of the 15<sup>th</sup>-century Italian artists to take up oil painting.

**Bosch, Hieronymus** (c. 1450–1516). North Netherlandish painter known for his moralizing paintings containing fantastic creatures. Bosch became wealthy through marriage, which likely allowed him some freedom in choosing his subjects and patrons. Bosch's inventions were widely imitated by later artists, such as Pieter Bruegel the Elder, and had a wide popular appeal.

**Boucicaut Master** (active early 15<sup>th</sup> century). An illuminator mainly active in Paris who influenced manuscript illumination in France in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. He is named after a book of hours made for Jean II le Meingre, maréchal de Boucicaut. The Boucicaut Master emphasized a greater naturalism in the depiction of perspective and rendering of landscape settings than had his predecessors.

**Bouts, Dieric** (c. 1415–75). North Netherlandish painter. He moved to Leuven by the mid-1450s, where he was named town painter in 1468. His most important contributions were in bringing a greater emphasis to landscape as an expressive element in figural paintings and in introducing portraits of contemporaries into history painting.

**Broederlam, Melchior** (c. 1355–c. 1411). South Netherlandish artist who was a *valet de chambre* and court painter to Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy. He provided the painted wings for two carved altarpieces made by the sculptor Jacques de Baerze for the charterhouse of Champmol in Dijon and included naturalistic elements in his scenes.

**Bruegel the Elder, Pieter** (1525/30–69). Netherlandish artist famed for his large-scale landscape and peasant scenes. He left for Italy soon after joining the Antwerp painters' guild in 1551. Unlike other northern artists, Bruegel did not record any works of art during his stay in Italy; instead, he drew landscapes and city views. After Bruegel's return to Antwerp in 1555, he worked for the publishing house of Hieronymus Cock, producing designs for engravings, including landscapes and moralizing allegories in the manner of Hieronymus Bosch.

**Burgkmair, Hans** (1473–1531). German painter, woodcut designer, and draughtsman. Burgkmair traveled to Italy in 1507, where he was exposed to contemporary Italian art. Back in Augsburg, he became associated with Humanist circles and maintained contacts with the imperial court. Between 1508

and 1512, Burgkmair designed a series of woodcuts for Emperor Maximilian I that used two or three blocks to add tone; these are among the earliest examples of *chiaroscuro* in woodblock printing.

**Calvin, Jean** (1509–64). Among the most significant theologians of the Protestant Reformation. Influenced by the ideas of the first Protestant Reformers, he broke with the Roman Catholic Church in 1534. His most influential text, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, was first published in 1536 and helped to systematize the Reformers' emphasis on the sovereignty of God and their advocacy of the doctrines of election and predestination.

**Campin, Robert** (c. 1375–1444). Netherlandish painter active in Tournai from 1405 or 1406 and likely the author of the paintings formerly attributed to the Master of Flémalle. He was among the earliest innovators of naturalistic oil painting in the Netherlands. Rogier van der Weyden was among his apprentices.

**Charles V** (1500–58). Holy Roman Emperor from 1519–1556. During his reign, Charles hoped to suppress the spread of the Protestant Reformation in his empire. In 1556, he abdicated his various positions, leaving Spain and the Netherlands to his son, Philip II of Spain, and the Holy Roman Empire to his brother, Ferdinand.

**Charles the Bold** (1433–77). Son of Philip the Bold and the last Valois Duke of Burgundy. He sought expansion of the Burgundian territories. Upon his death, his Netherlandish lands passed to his daughter, Mary, but the Burgundian territories in France reverted to the French crown because he had no male heir.

**Christus, Petrus** (c. 1410–75/6). Netherlandish painter. A number of his signed and dated paintings exist from the period 1446 to 1457. He was the first Netherlandish artist to use a consistent one-point perspective system. Devotional paintings and portraits seem to have constituted most of his work.

**Cleve, Joos van (Joos van der Beke)** (d. 1540/41). German painter. His production was eclectic both stylistically and thematically, and he collaborated with Joachim Patinir.

**Cranach the Elder, Lucas** (1472–1553). German painter and printmaker active in Saxony. Cranach became close to Martin Luther, who was under the protection of the electors in Saxony. Cranach depicted Luther in both painted and printed portraits. He may have been the first artist in Germany to make a *chiaroscuro* woodcut.

**David, Gerard** (c. 1460–1523). North Netherlandish painter. David was particularly gifted in recalling the themes and styles of the generation of Jan van Eyck, while updating this style to include a greater emphasis on landscape and themes from daily life.

**Dürer, Albrecht** (1471–1528). The most important artist of the German Renaissance. Dürer worked as painter, engraver, draughtsman, and designer of woodcuts of a variety of religious and secular subjects. He made two important

trips to Italy in his career, where his interest in Rational Humanist art was fostered. He was the first German artist to emphasize the depiction of the male and female nude, and he pursued the study of anatomical proportions and perspective. He also depicted scenes from classical mythology and made intensive study of the natural world, preserved in watercolor drawings. His woodcuts and engravings were disseminated throughout Europe.

**Erasmus, Desiderius** (c. 1466–1536). Dutch Humanist and theologian. At the start of the Protestant Reformation, Erasmus sought a middle path for reform, rather than a full break from the Roman Catholic Church. He was one of the most influential Humanist scholars of his century, famed for such books as *In Praise of Folly*, as well as his scholarly translation of the New Testament.

**Eyck, Hubert van** (1385/90–1426). Among the first Netherlandish artists to work extensively with oil paint. Hubert emphasized a new and naturalistic style of rendering figures, objects, and settings. His only surviving documented work, the *Adoration of the Lamb*, or the *Ghent Altarpiece*, was commissioned for St. Bavo's by Jodocus Vyd and his wife, Elisabeth Borluut. Hubert died in 1426, leaving the *Ghent Altarpiece* well advanced but unfinished.

**Eyck, Jan van** (c. 1395–1441). Netherlandish artist and brother of Hubert van Eyck. Van Eyck's extraordinary facility in working with oil paint to create a sense of convincing three-dimensional space on the flat surface of a panel has contributed to his fame since his own time. His use of objects from everyday life to convey symbolic meaning in a programmatic fashion was also influential. Van Eyck signed and dated his paintings more frequently than any other 15<sup>th</sup>-century artist in northern Europe and adopted a motto, "*als ich kan*" ("as I am able to do").

**Fazio, Bartolomeo** (before 1410–57). Italian Humanist and writer. His book *De viris illustribus* (1456) presented brief biographies of contemporary figures, classified according to their professions. He included Jan van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden in this text as two of the four best painters of his time (the others were the Italian artists Gentile da Fabriano and Pisanello).

**Ficino, Marsilio** (1433–99). Italian philosopher and writer. Ficino promoted Neo-Platonism in the circle of the Medici in Florence. He also promoted the idea of the artist as a manifestation of human creativity, whose intellect could lead to his transcendence of mere naturalistic forms into a higher, purer ideal. This conception both reflected and contributed to the increased dignity accorded to artists in the Renaissance.

**Frederick III** (1463–1525). Elector of Saxony from 1486 to 1525 and protector of Martin Luther. Lucas Cranach was his court painter beginning in 1505, but Frederick patronized other artists, too, notably, Albrecht Dürer.

**Geertgen tot Sint Jans** (active c. 1475–95). North Netherlandish painter. Geertgen's most important commission was for the altarpiece for the high altar of the Commandery church, of which only one wing has been preserved. His

attention to landscape settings and group portraiture, as well as his distinctive figural style, were innovations.

**Ghirlandaio, Domenico** (c. 1448–94). Italian painter, particularly noted for his portraits and depictions of secular life in the context of religious art. His decoration of the Sassetti chapel in S. Trinita (1482–85) included an *Adoration of the Magi*, which was indebted to the example of Hugo van der Goes's *Portinari Altarpiece* in Florence from 1483.

**Goes, Hugo van der** (c. 1440–82). South Netherlandish painter. His *Portinari Altarpiece*, commissioned by the Florentine merchant Tommaso Portinari for S. Maria Nuova in Florence, is the only surviving work attributable to Hugo from a 16<sup>th</sup>-century source. His art was characterized by a combination of Netherlandish realism with an emphasis on psychological and emotional experience.

**Goltzius, Hendrick** (1558–1617). Printmaker, draughtsman, and painter. Goltzius's career was spent in Haarlem, where he established a workshop of talented reproductive engravers. His own virtuoso engraving style first reflected the influence of the international Mannerist movement, but after his trip to Italy in 1590–1591, he worked in a naturalistic style tempered by the classicism of antiquity and Italian art. He gave up engraving entirely around 1600 and took up painting in oil instead.

**Gossaert, Jan, also called Mabuse** (c. 1478–1532). South Netherlandish painter, draughtsman, and printmaker. He was among the first Netherlandish artists to be influenced by the art of classical antiquity and the Italian Renaissance, both in style and subject matter. He was also the first Netherlandish artist to depict a life-size nude figure in a nonreligious painting.

**Grünewald, Matthias (Mathis Gothardt)** (1475/80–1528). German painter and draughtsman. His best-known work is the complex polyptych known as the *Isenheim Altarpiece*, completed in 1515 for the hospital of St. Anthony at Isenheim, which conveys a highly expressive spirituality.

**Heemskerck, Maarten van** (1498–1574). North Netherlandish painter, draughtsman, and designer of prints. Van Heemskerck painted mythological scenes, altarpieces, and portraits that combined elements of both Netherlandish and Italian art. He was a prolific designer of engravings as well, which were widely disseminated.

**Hemessen, Catarina van** (1528–after 1587). South Netherlandish painter, the daughter of Jan Sanders van Hemessen. Only 10 paintings by her survive, mainly portraits, dating between 1548 and 1552. In 1548, she painted an innovative self-portrait, for the first time showing an artist working at an easel in a portrait.

**Hemessen, Jan Sanders van** (active 1519–56). South Netherlandish artist who developed a style that balanced Italian and Netherlandish elements. He is best

known for paintings with crowded compositions, in which large, half-length figures placed in the foreground enact narratives that emphasize moral choice.

**Henry IV (the Pious)** (1473–1541). Son of Albert, Duke of Saxony. Lucas Cranach the Elder executed several portraits of Henry and his family.

**Henry VIII** (1491–1547). King of England from 1509 to 1547. His marital woes led to his break with Rome in 1533 and the establishment of the Act of Supremacy in 1534, which made the king the head of the English church, as well as the state. An important patron of the arts, he was served, among others, by Hans Holbein the Younger as a court painter.

**Hirschvogel, Augustin** (1503–53). German etcher and cartographer. Best known among his etchings are landscape prints reminiscent of the first generation of the Danube School artists, such as Altdorfer.

**Holbein the Younger, Hans** (c. 1497–1543). German painter, draughtsman, and designer. He went to England in 1526, where he received portrait commissions from court figures and Humanist scholars, such as Sir Thomas More. Although he returned to his home town of Basel in 1528, he left again for England in 1532. During this second stay, he became a court painter to Henry VIII. By the end of his career, he had portrayed approximately one-quarter of the British peerage.

**Hopfer, Daniel** (c. 1470–1536). German etcher. Around 1500, he transferred the method of etching on armor to etching on paper using iron plates; he appears to have been the first artist to do so.

**Housebook Master** (active c. 1470–1500). A now-anonymous German painter and engraver who owes his name to a book of drawings found in Amsterdam. Ninety-one drypoint engravings have been attributed to him, and his work was known to other engravers, notably, Dürer.

**Jean, Duke of Berry** (1340–1416). Third son of King Jean II of France and one of the most important art patrons of his time. He is known, above all, for his collection of illuminated manuscripts and his patronage of such illuminators as the Limbourg brothers.

**Leyden, Lucas van** (c. 1488/94–1533). North Netherlandish painter and printmaker. The first Dutch printmaker of international repute; considered Dürer's closest rival. He also painted religious scenes, portraits, and some early and influential scenes of daily life.

**Limbourg brothers, Pol, Herman, and Jean** (active by 1382; d. 1416). Northern Netherlandish manuscript illuminators. Their best-known work is found in the manuscript commissioned by the Duke of Berry commonly called the *Très Riches Heures* (c. 1408–16), which was left incomplete when the brothers died of the plague in 1416. The Limbourg brothers incorporated naturalistic observations, especially of landscape and peasant life, into the elegant International style in which they worked so successfully.

**Lochner, Stefan** (active c. 1440–51). German painter to whom some of the most important anonymous works from Cologne in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century have been attributed, despite a lack of documentary evidence. The central paintings of the group are two altarpieces, the *Dombild*, or the *Patron Saints of Cologne*, and the *Last Judgment*. Lochner used a German variant of the International style of painting, which emphasized a kind of sweet sentimentality alongside representational elegance.

**Loyet, Gerard** (active 1466–1502/3). South Netherlandish goldsmith. One of Loyet's works survives: the *Reliquary of Charles the Bold*, completed in 1466–67.

**Luther, Martin** (1483–1546). German theologian and writer. Luther's Ninety-Five Theses against indulgences (1517) found widespread popular support but were judged heretical by Catholic authorities, and he was excommunicated by Pope Leo X. Although his theology was not as radical as that of some of the other Reformers, he took precedence because of his role in initiating the events of the Protestant Reformation.

**Malouel, Jean** (c. 1365–1415). North Netherlandish painter active in Burgundy and uncle of the Limbourg brothers. From 1401–03, Malouel painted and gilded the life-size statues on Claus Sluter's *Well of Moses*. After Philip the Bold's death, Malouel worked for his successor, John the Fearless. His independent paintings reflected the popularity of International Gothic art at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

**Mander, Karel van** (1548–1606). Flemish writer and artist. He is best known for his *Schilder-boeck*, a handbook for artists first published in 1604. This included a series of biographies of northern European artists and was likely inspired by Vasari's *Lives*.

**Mantegna, Andrea** (1431–1506). Italian painter and printmaker. He was among the first Italian Renaissance painters to turn to ancient Roman art and architecture for inspiration, as well as to principles of mathematical perspective. His work as an engraver was also important; Dürer, among others, copied his engravings.

**Massys, Quinten** (c. 1466–1530). Netherlandish artist. Although his oeuvre included a number of altarpieces, over time, his clientele seemed to prefer private devotional works, portraits, and scenes of daily life. He was among the first Netherlandish artists to combine successfully aspects of Italian art (particularly the softened contours of Leonardo da Vinci's *sfumato*) with the detailed representational system of northern European art.

**Master E.S.** (active c. 1450–67). German engraver and goldsmith. Master E.S. was the first engraver to sign his plates with a monogram. More than 300 of his engravings are known, many in single impressions only. He was an important predecessor to later engravers, particularly Martin Schongauer.

**Master of Mary of Burgundy** (active c. 1469–c. 1483). South Netherlandish manuscript illuminator. He was among the most talented illuminators in conveying a sense of three-dimensional reality on the flat surface of the manuscript leaf, including the use of illusionistic borders.

**Master of the Playing Cards** (active 1430s). German engraver. He engraved a set of 60 playing cards that feature figures in contemporary dress, as well as animals and flowers.

**Master of St. Veronica** (active 1395–1425). German painter whose style suggests that he was active in Cologne. His expression of the International Gothic style would become highly influential for subsequent painters in Cologne.

**Maximilian I** (1459–1519). Holy Roman Emperor from the Austrian branch of the Hapsburgs. Through his 1477 marriage to Mary, duchess of Burgundy, he extended Hapsburg control from central Europe to the Netherlands, and the dynastic marriage of their son, Philip the Fair, to Juana of Castile added Spain to Hapsburg control.

**Meckenem, Israhel van** (c. 1440/45–1503). The most productive German engraver of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, with more than 600 designs. He engraved some of his own compositions but more often copied existing engravings by such figures as Master E. S. and Albrecht Dürer. His *Self-Portrait with His Wife, Ida* is the first engraved self-portrait.

**Memling, Hans** (c. 1435–94). Netherlandish painter. Memling followed in the tradition of Jan van Eyck and Petrus Christus, as well as Rogier. He painted more portraits than any other 15<sup>th</sup>-century Netherlandish artist but also received many commissions for altarpieces and private devotional paintings.

**Mor, Antonis** (c. 1516–c. 1576). North Netherlandish painter, active in Spain, England, and other centers. He specialized in portraiture and assimilated the monumental portrait style of Titian with Netherlandish attention to detail and smooth surfaces. Among his clients were Cardinal Granvelle, bishop of Arras, and many members of the Hapsburg court.

**More, Sir Thomas** (1478–1535). English lawyer, statesman, and Humanist. He resigned his post as Lord Chancellor of England to Henry VIII in 1532 because of his reluctance to accept Henry VIII's claim to be the head of the English church. More's principled stance led to his imprisonment, trial for high treason, and execution in 1535. Through More's friendship with Erasmus, Holbein was able to meet important patrons on his first trip to England in 1526–1528.

**Patinir, Joachim** (c. 1480–1524). Influential Netherlandish painter. Patinir was the first artist to consistently emphasize landscape in his history paintings. He collaborated with other Antwerp painters, such as Quinten Massys and Joos van Cleve, who painted figures in Patinir's landscapes. His paintings followed a compositional scheme, with high viewpoints and horizon lines and a division of

space into three color bands (brown, green, and blue) to indicate atmospheric perspective. He was widely admired and copied.

**Philip II** (1527–98). Son of Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, and king of Spain. His reign was difficult because of war and civil uprising in various parts of his kingdom, notably, the Spanish Netherlands, which was in open rebellion from 1568. He was a fervent Roman Catholic, willing to press the claims of his religion through such controversial institutions as the Inquisition. Philip was also the leading art collector of his time and included many Netherlandish paintings in his collection.

**Philip the Bold** (1342–1404). The first Valois Duke of Burgundy. Through his 1369 marriage to Margaret de Male, Philip the Bold eventually expanded the control of Burgundy over a large part of modern Belgium and northern France. Wealthy and powerful, he was a major patron of the arts, as witnessed by the architectural, sculptural, and painted works made for the Chartreuse de Champmol, the Carthusian monastery at Dijon, which became his burial site.

**Philip the Good** (1396–1467). Duke of Burgundy from 1419 to 1467. Through conquest and diplomacy, Philip expanded the duchy's territories to include such areas as modern-day Luxembourg. He was a patron of all the major art forms; he is also known today as the employer of Jan van Eyck.

**Pollaiuolo, Antonio** (c. 1432–98). Italian sculptor, painter, and engraver. He was particularly interested in depicting the human body, often nude, in motion.

**Raimondi, Marcantonio** (c. 1480–c. 1534). Italian engraver who worked predominantly as a reproductive printmaker. In 1506, Dürer complained about Raimondi's unauthorized engraved copies of his woodcut series *The Life of the Virgin*. He made more than 300 prints, of which the best known reproduce drawings or paintings by Raphael.

**Schongauer, Martin** (c. 1450–91). German painter and engraver. He helped introduce Netherlandish naturalism and the widespread use of oil paint to German-speaking lands. He was also among the most talented and influential engravers of the later 15<sup>th</sup> century, signing his work with a monogram.

**Scorel, Jan van** (1495–1562). North Netherlandish painter. His countryman Pope Adrian VI appointed him curator of the Vatican collection of antiquities during his short pontificate; Van Scorel also studied carefully the work of his Italian contemporaries. He moved to Utrecht in the Netherlands in 1524, where he served as both an ecclesiastic and a master of a large painting workshop.

**Thomas à Kempis (Thomas Hemerken)** (1379/80–1471). German mystic and religious author. He was ordained in 1413 and spent his life writing devotional works that reflected the *Devotio moderna* (Modern Devotions) spiritual movement, with its emphasis on the importance of the personal, individual relationship of each human with God. He is best known for *De imitatione Christi* (*The Imitation of Christ*).

**Vasari, Giorgio** (1511–74). Italian painter, architect, and biographer. He is perhaps best known as the author of the *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, in which he presented the biographies of his contemporaries and predecessors in an evaluative context. Although he championed Italian art of the 16<sup>th</sup> century above all else, he expressed approval of some northern artists, such as Dürer and Lucas van Leyden, as printmakers.

**Weyden, Rogier van der** (c. 1399–1464). South Netherlandish painter. Considered to be part of the founding generation of Netherlandish oil painters with Campin and the Van Eycks, he placed stronger emphasis than they had on the emotional ramifications of his religious narratives. He was important as a portrait painter, as well.

**William I, Stadtholder (known as William the Silent)** (1533–84). Prince of Orange. First a loyal subject of the Hapsburg monarchy and an able administrator for it, in 1568, William became the leader of the Netherlandish revolt against Philip II of Spain's rule that became the Eighty Years' War. He won several battles against the Spanish but was assassinated in Delft by a Spanish loyalist in 1584. The inhabitants of the Netherlands consider him the father of their country.

**Wolgemut, Michael** (1434–1519). German painter and woodcut designer. His large workshop in Nuremberg designed woodcuts and produced paintings. The shop is particularly known for designing the woodcuts for the *Nuremberg Chronicle* (1493).

**Zeuxis** (fl. late 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.–early 4<sup>th</sup> century). Along with Apelles, the most famous painter from Greek antiquity. Zeuxis was admired for his naturalistic style and illusionistic effects.